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Climbing

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Defined by the Line

Josh Ewing had a good gig in Salt Lake—a corporate-job income, the comforts of a city, regular climbing partners. Then he moved to Bluff, Utah, where now he scrounges for climbing partners, makes long approaches to chossy rock and has to drive hours to get full-strength beer—all so he could be closer to the remote climbing areas he loved, like Valley of the Gods, Texas Tower and Indian Creek. But after seeing first-hand how aggressive oil and gas extraction and careless visitation were destroying the region, he drew the line. Now every hour he's not out exploring his adopted red-rock country, he's working to defend it.

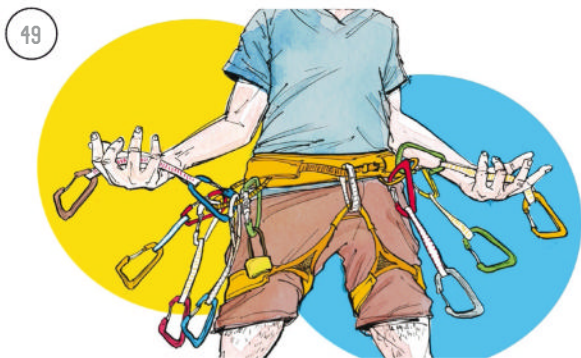
DRAW YOUR LINE and join the fight to protect these desert areas recognized and revered by climbers around the world. patagonia.com/climb

Photos: Mikey Schaefer
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SARAH MARVEZ SAMPLES THE
TURNING POINT (V9) IN BOULDER,
COLORADO'S SATELLITE BOULDERS,
ONE OF THE AREA'S INFINITE CLIMB-
ING OPTIONS. SEE MORE OF WHAT
THIS CLIMBER'S PARADISE HAS TO
OFFER ON PAGE 24.

Climbing

LEADING SINCE 1970

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Within U.S.: (800) 829-5895
Canada and Foreign: (386) 447-6318
Subscriber Service Email: climbing@
emailcustomerservice.com

Contributors: Visit climbing.com/contribute

Retailers: To carry CLIMBING magazine and CLIMBING magazine publications in your shop, contact Bonnie Mason: 1-800-381-1288 x95175.

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FLASH



 CLIMBER

Justin Ridgely

 ROUTE

All Boars Go to Heaven



DIFFICULTY


V6



LOCATION

Oahu, Hawaii

Even in bright sunlight, this area, known as Boarlomana because of its large population of wild pigs, remains in semi-darkness thanks to heavy jungle foliage, a dense banyan tree canopy, and a surrounding bamboo forest. Local developer, climber, and owner of Volcanic Rock Gym Justin Ridgely is largely responsible for the growth spurt in Hawaiian bouldering, taking the established number of zones from two to more than 40 in less than four years. He credits an amazing bouldering scene, an "aloha spirit that is very present in the climbing community," Google Earth, "relationships with hunters and hikers, long hikes through thick jungle...and conversations with landowners and government employees" for the successful expansion of bouldering in the Aloha State.

 RYAN MOSS



FLASH





CLIMBER

Will Gadd



ROUTE

Niagara Falls



DIFFICULTY


W16



LOCATION

Niagara Falls, New York

With an average of 4 million cubic feet of water flowing over the falls every minute, cold winters, and a magnetic pull for death-defying stunts, it might seem surprising that this international landmark had never been climbed before. But when Canadian climber Will Gadd started to investigate climbing the falls last year after a very cold winter in the Northeast, he found miles of bureaucratic red tape. Thankfully the permit cleared three days before the planned ascent, and Gadd found "legit world-class ice climbing." Because the ice manifests as a result of sideways spray from the falls (as opposed to top-down water ice), it's "formed in shells and repetitive onion skins, and if you hit those in the wrong place, they can fracture very unpredictably."

 GREG MIONSKE / RED BULL
CONTENT POOL

FLASH





CLIMBER
Jimmy Haden

ROUTE
Soul Garden

DIFFICULTY
5.13b

LOCATION
**Mt. Watkins, Yosemite,
California**

On June 30, 2014, Jimmy Haden and partner Seth Carter completed the first free ascent of *Soul Garden* on the 2,000-foot South Face of Mt. Watkins in Yosemite, which included this all-points-off dyno that took Haden about 10 attempts to complete during the send. The late Sean Leary started working on this line in summer 2012, and Haden joined him on the “endless 5.12 pitches and the mid-5.13 crux” in April 2013. Leary was a much-loved figure in the climbing community, and when comforting a friend who’d lost a loved one, he said, “Your grief is this giant, gaping hole, but as you move forward, the edges soften and other beautiful things start to grow around it. It becomes sort of a garden in your soul, a place you can visit when you want to be near your love.” After Leary died in a BASE jumping accident in March 2014, Haden’s resolve to finish the route grew exponentially. When he finished it, he said, “I had realized Sean’s vision and planted the first seed in my own Soul Garden.”

ANDREW BURR



CLIMBER

Sachi Amma

ROUTE

Joe-Cita

DIFFICULTY

5.14d/9a

LOCATION

Oliana, Spain

When 25-year-old Japanese strongman Sachi Amma sent *Seleccio Anal* (5.15a/9a+) on February 18, his fourth 5.15 during a three-week trip to Spain, he almost completed his overall goal for 2015, which was to send 10 routes 5.14d or harder. The tick of *Seleccio Anal* (a linkup of *Seleccio Natural* and *Analogica*) marked his seventh route 5.14d or harder for the year—all on this one trip to Spain—including his hardest route yet: Chris Sharma's *Fight or Flight* (5.15b/9b) at Oliana. Amma made four separate trips from Japan and tried *Fight or Flight* more than 30 times before nabbing the send. He is a force in the competition world, too, having won the overall Lead World Cup in 2012 and 2013.

EDDIE GIANELLONI





Gefhe Mauar (7a+) Tre Cime di Lavaredo, Dolomites, Italy - Photo: Rikky Felderer

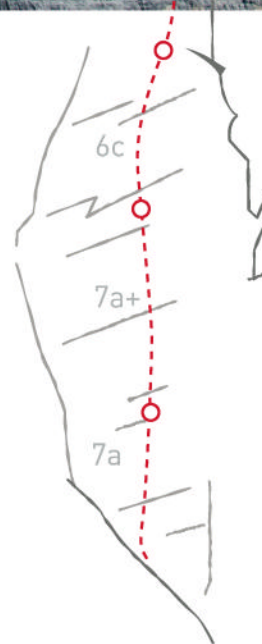


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CONTRIBUTORS



[Chris Schulte]

Texas born and Colorado bred, this powerful all-around climber made a name for himself ticking the hardest boulder problems in the country. "I love the exploration, work, travel, investment, and growth," he says. In this issue, he advises us on the finer points of compression climbing (page 28).



[Answer Man]

We first met Mr. Man while climbing in Boulder Canyon. Man refuses to climb in that "sess pool of cossy mediocrity," but he sleeps in his truck there when he's had one too many single malts. He delivers his advice column in unmarked envelopes which our intern transcribes. Read his latest wisdom on page 49.



[Kyle Ward]

Kyle arrived in the Climbing office fresh off a trip to China, where he worked on a documentary film about AIDS. An avid climber, he got to put his passions for research and sending to use in this issue writing about the finer climbs of Boulder, Colorado and slamming the perfect breakfast.

APPROACH

ED NOTE



We Love Us. And You.



At *Climbing*, we hire the most selfish people we can find. That might sound like a really bad idea, given our fairly altruistic mission to grow and improve the sport of climbing, but I'm pretty certain that by employing people who are totally obsessed, everything and everyone else be damned, you win.

See, a selfish editor strives to have their stories get the most page views (bonus points added for how many days out of the office they accumulated that month), so those stories have to have impact and payoff. A self-centered photographer does everything he can to get the shot just right, whether it's in the field (yay!) or the studio (yay minus one). And get your hands on a writer who's really driven? Watch out—you'll learn more about a given topic than any college professor could deliver. What I'm talking about is finding people with ravenous psych for climbing and for finding ways to improve training, performance, smarts, safety, and fun. Our big goal is to improve your climbing life, and our way of doing that is to improve our own first. If we do it right, we all win.

So when good friend and Exum guide Zahan Billimoria put a bug in my ear about doing some big climbs in the Tetons, Senior Editor Julie Ellison and I trained for months, learned as much as we could about moving efficiently through the alpine, and had so much fun that we created a package of advice from pro mountain guides and choice routes to put on your summer tick list ("Lighter! Faster! Farther!" p. 54). When Editor-at-Large Dougald MacDonald heard about some first ascent potential from another longtime climber, he dropped everything to go add to his already impressive resume ("Cloud Nine," p. 70). When we went bouldering down South and got our butts handed to us by those lovely sandstone slopers, we went to one of the best compression climbers out there to give us some beta ("Main Squeeze," p. 28). The list goes on, but it's getting late in the afternoon, and I'd like to go get some climbing in. So let me encourage you to turn the page and get on with improving your climbing, too. So yeah, nothing but a bunch of selfish A-holes here, but I hope you enjoy the fruits of us looking out for number one.

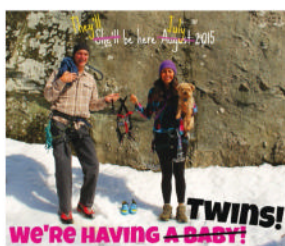
SHANNON DAVIS, EDITOR

UNSOLICITED BETA

Pennsylvania politicians have always given short shrift to western PA, so I guess Seth Derr will soon be running for office. His piece on PA bouldering [“Keystone State of Mind,” March 2015] focused almost exclusively on areas east of Laurel Ridge. Western PA has at least as much bouldering. In Dunbar, there’s Rob’s Knobs, Krahlick, Lost Crag, Elk, Cow, Rattlesnake, Fish, Rebecca, and Weeping Rock. Just down the road in Connellsville there’s even more. The Explorers Club of Pittsburgh website lists 32 areas within an hour and a half of the city. Seth, come west and be amazed at the quality sandstone in PA’s other half.

—Dick Watson, via email

Writer Seth Derr replies: Wasn’t our last governor from Pittsburgh? Sorry Ed, I didn’t mean to snub; I just couldn’t tackle all the state’s rock in 1,200 words. I’m psyched you took the time to point out these areas. I bet that even with your additions we’re still short! We have climbable rock coming out of our ears here in PA. Hope I can count on your vote in 2018!



LETTER
OF THE
MONTH

My boyfriend Joe and I are expecting twin baby girls this July. Our announcement photo was taken at Carderock, a local Maryland crag. We met five years ago at another local Maryland climbing spot, Sugarloaf Mountain. It’s truly been a climbing love story, and it continues on with two more little climbers on the way!

—Christine Flores,
via email



Congrats, Christine and Joe! Your adorable announcement has won our Letter of the Month award, and we’re sending you a Trango Junior Harness because you can never start them too early (though 25 lbs. is the minimum, so anything less would actually be too early).

ARCHIVES



While climbers had explored high peaks for decades, it was Reinhold Messner and Peter Habeler’s ascent of Gasherbrum I in 1975 that popularized the fast and light ethos. Climbing published Habeler’s account of the ascent in our March 1977 issue. The minimalist style was particularly conducive to the trip, as the team only had 10 days to prepare. They’d given up after believing they’d been unable to obtain permits from Pakistan. The permits came at the last minute, which started a mad dash to procure funds and supplies, sending them along with odd provisions, like too much honey.



“There wasn’t any time to prepare the usual ‘expedition’ food packets, procure special ‘expedition’ equipment, ad infinitum. Chances are, had we had time, we would have foregone it all. We procured the minimum amount of food needed, which was basically what we eat at home.... We did bring along quite a bit of honey. The only thing unusual about our provisioning was this abundance of honey in our diet in camp and on the climb.”

Once the team set off, they were committed. While their style provided the time to climb the route in their weather window, it also closed out any room for error.

“Our plan was very simple: Move fast. We’d have to maintain a pace that disallows belaying. This meant going unroped through the lower ice face and the upper portion to the summit. Belaying would stretch the trip out, exposing us to the next storm period. We were in no position to risk bivouacking out a stormy period on the face. We hadn’t the hardware or the gear to build safe bivvys, nor the clothing and provisions to sit out storms of any length.”

In the end the team was more than pleased with their success, already aware that they’d set the course for the next generation. They left for another alpine expedition almost immediately.

“Hidden Peak’s north face had gone alpine style, the first time such a climb had been completed without porters, fixed camps, fixed ropes, with the climbers going unroped most of the time. Some say ours was a trip into the future. Maybe it was, but I wouldn’t have done it with anyone other than Messner. As you read this, we’re trying again—this time Dhaulagiri. We’ll let you know how it went.”*

*It went poorly. The pair called it quits on Dhaulagiri at 6,000 meters due to unforeseen difficulty and significant avalanche risk.

CONSENSUS

What is your preferred descent method?

63%

Rappel

37% of climbers surveyed enjoy going up cliffs but not down them. They’ll take the walk-off descent when available.

KEEP IN TOUCH



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letters@climbing.com

#SummitPhotos

Most climbs don't end on a summit, so it's important to document the ones that do. Everyone has their own summit photo tradition. Some smile. Some stare introspectively into the distance. Some go for the classic jumping shot. Others get naked. Mike Libeck, as he described in the March 2015 issue of *Climbing*, poses in the current year's Chinese zodiac mask. Here are a few of our readers celebrating success in their own ways.



Elephant-gorilla team on Cerro Mocho summit. That's Cerro Torre behind us. Chalten, Argentina. February 2015.

@LIM4TO



Standing on Stok Kangri summit at 20,080 feet in Ladakh, India.

ADARSH HEMRAJANI



Papa Reass always poses as his favorite free climber Lynn Hill. Here he is after breaking in his new hot pink rope on *Jah Man* (5.10) in Utah.

JESSE PUNSAI



The summit spire of Salbitschjen in Switzerland. We reached it by climbing the West Ridge, which is said to be one of the best ridges in the Alps.

@LINEHUNTERS



My summit photo from the top of Mt. Adams in Washington is best described as: "Draw me like one of your French girls."

LELAND NISKY



The summit of Gerlach Mountain. The climb was significant because we got to the top with my dad, a trip I wanted to realize for years.

@CLIMBTHEWALLAPP



Glorious day on top of Baker Peak, the third highest peak in Nevada, sitting at 12,306 feet.

CHRISTIAN LANLEY



Birthday climbing at Seneca Rocks, West Virginia. *Gunsight to South Peak*. The "Gata Suit" and birthday hat—best way to celebrate another year!

SELMA NUNES

OVERHEARD

"I found a solution: Climb a little faster, be home for dinner."

—Ueli Steck explains how alpinism is conducive to married life to a sold-out crowd in Boulder, Colorado.

"I always have to see what new tricks you guys are writing about on those yellow pages so I can be prepared for questions about them at talks I give. You guys keep me on my toes."

—Will Gadd, to *Climbing* editor Shannon Davis at Chattanooga's *The Crash Pad* climber hostel.

"I almost feel like I should do 10 more, then I could be like 'Yay, 300!' But that would be dumb."

—Alex Honnold after soloing 290 pitches on his 29th birthday. Watch the video at climbing.com/honnoldbday.

ROCK CRAFTS

Make Your Own Climbing Hold Mug



EVER WANTED TO work your grip strength while sipping on a hot cup of joe? Take your morning multitasking to the next level by making your own climbing hold mug. Our method will provide you with a mug that's heat resistant, dishwasher safe, and sure to make all your climber friends jealous. And if you already have the tools, the whole thing will cost you less than \$10.

Climbing Holds

WHERE TO FIND THEM, WHAT TO GET

While you can spend \$60 for a set of 10 brand-new holds, the cheapest way to get them is to go to your local gym and ask if they have old holds they're getting rid of. Many gyms will give you a couple holds for free or pocket change. They may be cracked or worn, but after a thorough cleaning they'll be perfect for a mug. Try to find one tall enough to cover both handle attachments for a cleaner finished product. It's also a good idea to get holds from a few different brands. We found some holds were impossible to file at all, while others shaped nicely with a little elbow grease.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- ▶ Mug
- ▶ Climbing hold
- ▶ All-purpose silicone adhesive sealant
- ▶ Sandpaper
- ▶ Dust mask and eye protection
- ▶ Rounded file (the coarser the better)
- ▶ Hammer
- ▶ Optional: belt sander

WARNING: Climbing holds are not microwave-safe!

[step 4]



Thoroughly clean and dry the mug and climbing hold.

[step 5]



Apply an excessive amount of silicone adhesive to the back of your hold.

[step 1]



Place your mug on a solid surface and smash the handle off with a hammer. Aim straight down for the top of the handle, close to where it attaches to the cup. You may destroy a few mugs in this step, so it's good to have backups.

[step 2]



Use the sandpaper and file to remove any handle remnants from the mug and smooth down the area.

(Note: Wear a dust mask and eye protection for steps 1 through 3.)

[step 3]



File the back of your climbing hold until it will sit somewhat flush against the side of your mug. This step can take quite some time. Alternately, you can use the rounded edge of a belt sander to speed things up considerably.

[step 6]



Press your climbing hold against the mug where the handle was. The extra adhesive will fill in gaps where the hold isn't flush. Clean off any extra adhesive that squishes out from the side or up through the bolt hole.

[step 7]



Wrap tape tightly around the hold and mug to secure in place. Allow to dry for as long as the adhesive label recommends, probably 24 hours.

Bonus points: For that authentic climbing-wall look, you can saw off the end of a bolt and glue it in the bolt hole with more adhesive.

[step 8]



Try not to pump out as you enjoy a scalding-hot beverage in your sweet new climber mug! Seriously, don't spill hot coffee all over yourself.

UNBELAYVABLE

Scary (and true) tales from a crag near you

I was at the gym when I saw a guy “self-belaying” on top rope. He was tied into one side of the rope, and he had a tube-style belay device clipped to his belay loop, which was attached to the free-hanging side of the rope. He would climb up five feet or so, pull the slack through his device, then continue up. I stopped him as soon as I saw what was going on.

—Ryan R., Boulder, Colorado

LESSON: It takes half a second to fall five feet. The chance that a climber could find the rope, grab it, and brake in that time is slim to none. Proper rope-soloing should always be done with progress-capture devices. These will stop a fall regardless of what you’re doing. It’s important to use two devices for redundancy, in case one should fail. Rope-soloing is a complex skill not to be taken

lightly, and certainly not to be left up to reflexes. In fact, it should never be done in a gym without their express permission. That’s what autobelays are for. For a more in-depth primer on top rope soloing, check out climbing.com/skill/solo-toproping.

In my early climbing career, I nearly killed myself when I extended an anchor over an edge with just one long sling. After one climb, the sling was cut halfway through. I still carry the section on my keychain as a reminder.

—S.S., via Climbing.com

LESSON: Edges can be tricky. If your chosen anchor location puts your anchor material over sharp rock, your first choice should be to build that anchor somewhere else. However, that’s not always an option. When top roping, extending your anchor with a thick static line is the best choice because they’re the most resistant to cutting. If that’s not possible, you may need to pad the edge. Some climbers use carpet or sections of hose, some companies sell expensive roller-systems—even a bunched-up sweatshirt is better than nothing. The thinner your anchor material, the more important it is to protect it, but even that fat static rope will need help if the rock looks like a hand saw, and it never hurts to add redundancy with some extra strands of rope/sling/cordelette in the problem area, in case one does cut through. In fact, it never hurts to make your anchors

redundant, sharp edge or not. In a multi-pitch scenario, it’s not practical to lug along a heavy static line or materials to pad the edge, but there are ways to quickly extend an anchor, so do some research. It also might be easier to just build the anchor in another location.

I saw a belayer at the climbing gym take the brake strand and try to hold it between her legs so that she could use both of her hands to take a selfie.

—Sean Miller, via Climbing.com

LESSON: Whenever you’re belaying, your full attention should be on your climber and your hand should be on the brake strand. Your primary responsibility is to keep your climbing partner (usually a friend of yours) from hitting the ground, which she would not appreciate doing. There’s absolutely no reason to put a climber in danger by neglecting your duties to take a selfie. It’s not like gym routes are two-hour ordeals. You’re not waiting for your partner to aid her way through a tricky pitch on El Cap’s *Reticent Wall*. You can easily take the same selfie in two minutes when she’s back on the ground. Better yet, have her take the photo for you. Selfies are passé.

SEE SOMETHING UNBELAYVABLE?

EMAIL UNBELAYVABLE@CLIMBING.COM.

Details That Matter

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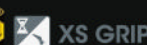
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X-Boulder





 CLIMBER
Nyle Baker

 ROUTE
Gutshot

 DIFFICULTY
V11

 LOCATION
Gunks, New York

While the bouldering might not be the main reason Northeastern climbers flock to the Shawangunk Ridge in New York, the few hundred established problems on solid quartz conglomerate range from V0 to V14, making it a great place for boulderers of all ability levels to try hard. Compression-centric moves guard the top of this boulder, which was put up by local New Paltz climber Andy Salo, in the Lost City area.

 **ANDREW BURR**

THE CLIMB



ADVICE

Walking the Walk, [p.22](#)

Brad Petersen is the Director of the Utah Office of Outdoor Recreation—and he's been climbing for 30 years. Find out how he advocates for climbers and the environment through his role in government.

EPICENTER

The awesomeness of Boulder, CO, [p.24](#)

INSTANT EXPERT

Find compression success, [p.28](#)

TRAINING

No more skipping leg day at the gym, [p.30](#)

NUTRITION

Expert-approved breakfast, [p.32](#)

BRAD PETERSEN GETS IT DONE ON THE OFFWIDTH SECTION OF *IN SEARCH OF SUDS* (5.10+) ON WASHER WOMAN TOWER. FOLLOW HIM ON INSTAGRAM: @UTAHOUTDOORRECREATIONOFFICE



Walking the Walk

Meet Brad Petersen, Director of the Utah Office of Outdoor Recreation. Yes, that's a thing.

BY SHANNON DAVIS

"On belay—not that it'll help for awhile!" Brad says, and I set off on the runout final pitch of *In Search of Suds* (5.10+). It's a six-pitch route on Washer Woman Tower that's just off the White Rim Road in Canyonlands National Park, and it's got a little bit of everything from groveling, blue-collar offwidth to thin face climbing on pitch six. I'm not a big fan of leading offwidth, and Brad's not overly psyched on crimps through R-rated territory (protected by rickety old pins no less), so we make pretty good partners. After reaching the top, we're rewarded with what I'd argue is the best bazillion-acre view in all of the Desert Southwest. Sepia-tone canyons fold in on one another, towers and buttes line the rim, and the snow-capped La Sals glow in the distance. It was one of the most memorable multi-pitch routes I've ever done in the desert, but just another meeting in the books for Brad. His job description has got to be one of the most interesting—and challenging—in the country.

In early 2013, Utah Governor Gary Herbert had a crazy idea: His office could do more to improve recreational opportunities in the state and to protect public lands. So, in conjunction with the Outdoor Industry Association, he created a position in the state's Office of Economic Development to do just that. Then he called Brad and appointed him to the task.

Brad's a native Utahn with an impressive business-oriented resume. His past job titles can be defined with just a couple of letters (GM, COO, etc.). But more important, he also has more than 30 years experience climbing, paddling, skiing, hunting, and motorcycling the Beehive State's backcountry.

"How can you advocate for Utah's outdoor industry and develop new recreational amenities throughout the state if you aren't emotionally tied to them?" he says. "This is a position where you need to walk the walk in addition to talking the talk. I started rock climbing in 1985, ice climbing in '90, alpine climbing in '92, and climbing big walls in '99. And this experience plays directly into the mission of my office, which is to employ Utah's unique natural assets in ways that inspire people, businesses, and communities to thrive." That could mean showing big companies that Utah is committed to developing a high quality of life that will make it easy to attract key employees or helping rural towns discover ways to use recreation to support tourism. Brad tells me there's one town that you could argue was saved by climbers.

"Climbing has had a strong economic impact in Orangeville, where Joe's Valley bouldering is located," Brad says. "Since 2000 when Ben Moon first climbed *Black Lung* (V13), Joe's Valley has grown to become an international climbing destination, bringing tourism dollars into an economy typically driven by coal mining. Now that coal is being replaced by cleaner natural gas, we're working with the land managers and groups like the Access Fund and Salt Lake Climbers Alliance to enhance camping facilities and access to the boulders. It's a unique partnership driven by climbers that directly benefits the community."

Months after our Washer Woman climb, I join Brad on a mountain biking and climbing tour along Canyonlands' White Rim Trail. In typical Brad fashion, he rides all 110 miles in one push just to make sure conditions are good before meeting me at noon. Utah couldn't have a better steward.

WHAT I LEARNED ABOUT MAKING A DIFFERENCE THROUGH CLIMBING

1

EXPLORE NEW AREAS

As the Joe's Valley story proves, just visiting new crags and bouldering areas can have a positive economic impact on surrounding towns. Climbers are notorious for stretching a buck as far as it will go, but go ahead and get a coffee or a burger or rent an extra pad instead of risking a rolled ankle. Your visit and support provide livelihoods.

2

GET ENGAGED

The population grows, climbing increases in popularity, and our public lands are under increased pressure. The days of taking access for granted are over. It's imperative to support organizations like the Access Fund (accessfund.org) and local advocacy groups like the Salt Lake Climbers Alliance (saltlakeclimbers.org) to protect the future of climbing.

3

GET OUT OF THE OFFICE

Some of my best policy discussions have occurred while leading the state's senior government officials on alpine climbs, river trips, or mountain bike rides. Whether you're brainstorming for work or trying to resolve a conflict in a relationship, doing it within the larger context of a shared adventure will bring solutions quicker than a boardroom.

4

MAKE BIG GOALS

While I have favorite area climbs I revisit annually, my personal goal is to slowly tick off Roper and Steck's *50 Classic Climbs of North America*. The various styles and skills required to tackle them keep me active and progressing toward something. It also keeps you in the climbing community. Plus, I climb at Momentum climbing gym three days a week.

5

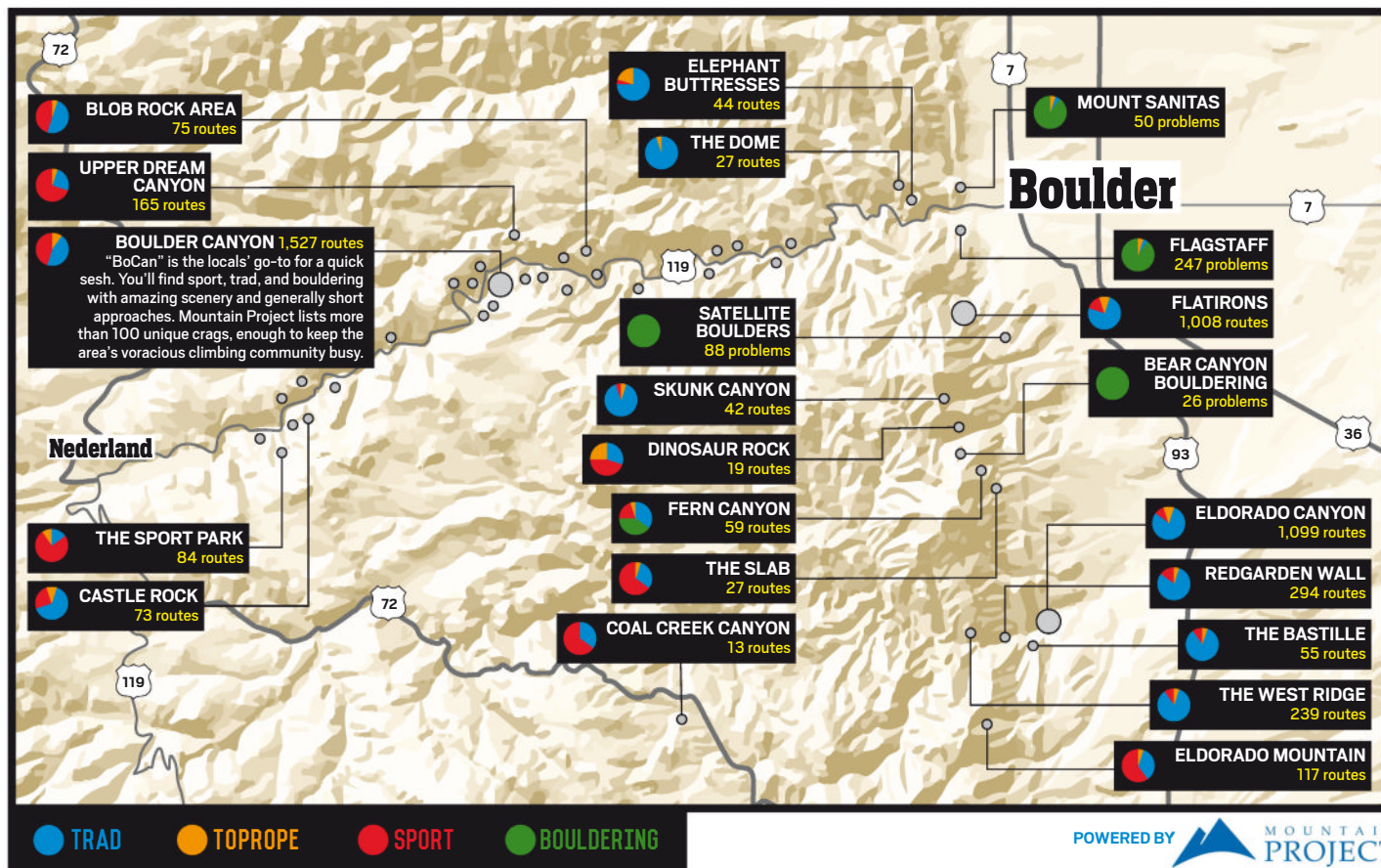
TAKE PICTURES

Utah has 30 million acres of public land and more rock than anyone could possibly climb in a lifetime. The natural beauty is off the charts, and now that social media enables everyone to share experiences so effectively, your photos and stories do some heavy lifting for us, marketing-wise. Our natural assets are key to Utah's long-term strategic plan and unsurpassed quality of life.

Boulder, CO

AMERICA'S ULTIMATE CLIMBING TOWN

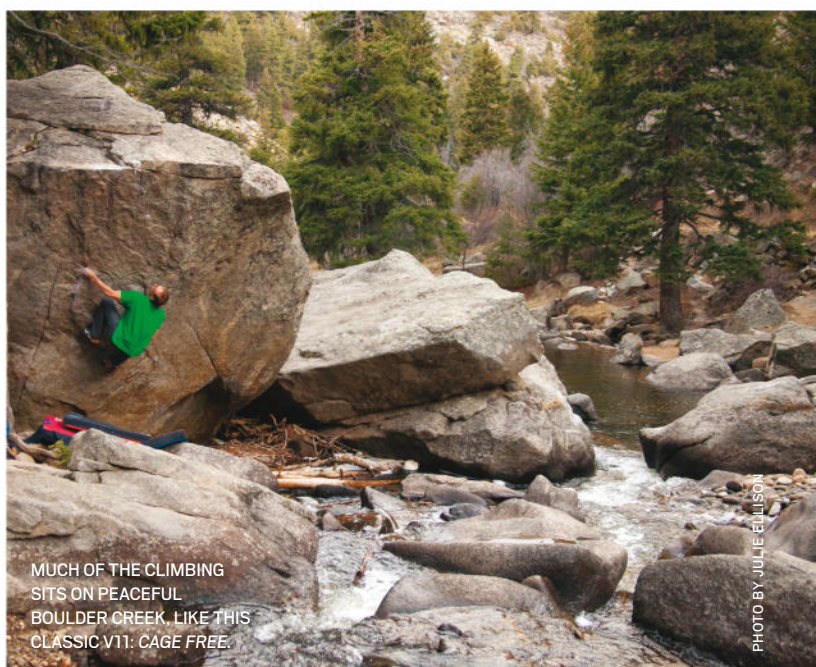
By Kyle Ward



Welcome to Climber-ville



THIS TOWN OF ABOUT 100,000 has more than 4,000 routes so close to town that you can send in time for yoga class and a jaunt to Whole Foods for coconut water and kale salad. With traditional, sport, bouldering, and even seasonal mixed and ice climbing, there is a reason why many of the world's best climbers live and train here. Whether you want to spend the day in Boulder Canyon crushing granite classics, bumping dubstep during a bouldering sesh at Flagstaff, running out a blood-curdling "5.8" in Eldorado Canyon, or cruising 1,000 feet up a Flatiron beneath a full moon, Boulder is an essential stop for every itinerant climber (and you might never leave). Peak times to climb span from spring to fall, but with more than 300 days of sunshine, you can find climbable rock year-round. If you do catch a freak weather front, don't fret, as there are a handful of world-class gyms with complimentary showers and unwanted beta. And whether you want to perk up or loosen up, Boulder has a lifetime's worth of coffee shops and breweries to visit. If the impossible happens and you run out of stuff to climb, Estes Park and Golden are within 40 and 20 miles, respectively, and they boast another 2,500 routes. Better start packing the van!





WHAT
GIVES
YOU
LIFE?



Marmot[®]
FOR LIFE

TRAINING FOR THE ADVENTURE

Photo: Kaare Iverson

LOCALS KNOW

[eat]

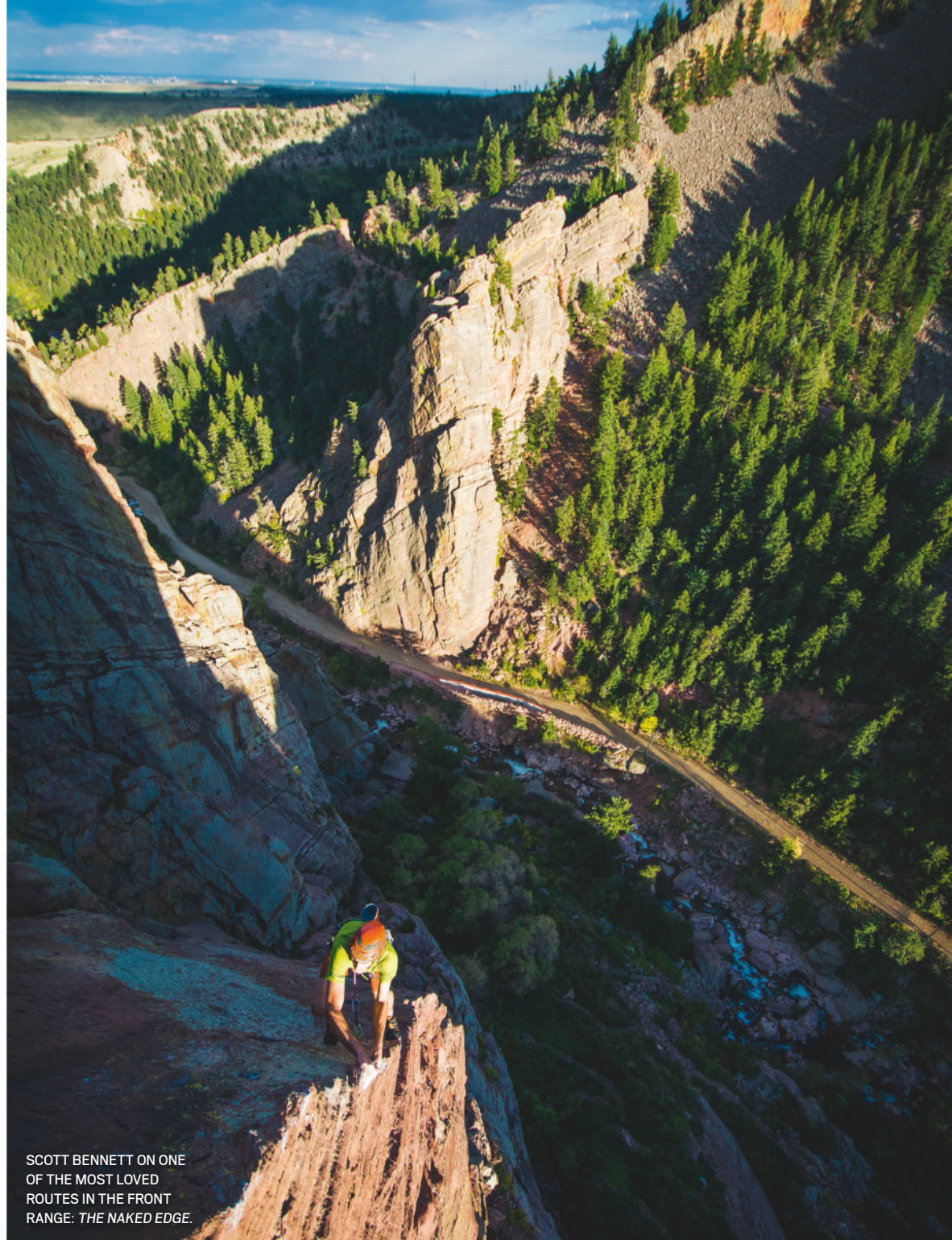
If you think the best thing about sending is pigging out afterward to reward yourself, start with some nachos and local beer at Southern Sun Pub and Brewery (mountainsunpub.com, 303-543-0886). If you're in the mood for Indian, conveniently placed next to Movement Climbing + Fitness is the well-priced and addictive Curry-n-Ke-bob (currynkebob.com, 720-328-4696), where you can call in for a to-go order or grab a booth and some tikka masala for around \$10. On the pricier side, Mateo Restaurant Provençal (mateorestaurant.com, 303-443-7766) is a pro climber's favorite date spot. It is not uncommon to catch the likes of Cedar Wright or Daniel Woods pairing roasted duck with some of the best wines in town. Don't worry about dress codes; Boulderites are known for enjoying the bourgeois lifestyle in a parka and muddy trail shoes.

[drink]

The only thing that rivals the number of crags in the area is the number of excellent nearby breweries, and drinking at elevation stretches your dollar further. If you want to drink like a local, head to Boulder Beer (boulderbeer.com, 303-444-8448) or Upslope Brewing Company (upslopebrewing.com, 2 locations in town) and try anything on tap. We recommend staples like Avery's White Rascal and Upslope's Craft Lager, each around \$5. If you happen to be downtown, the new and improved Bohemian Biergarten offers some tasty European imports in full and half steins as well as das boot with great pre-WWII atmosphere and live music. However, be prepared to drop \$12 a pop and risk a hangover for the full-stein experience. Or scrap the typical crowds and head to the Outback Saloon (outbacksaloon.net); it's the best dive bar in Boulder. Here you will find pool tables, dry humor, and ambitious karaoke singers. Oh, and cheap beer.

[stay]

Have you ever dreamed of a smoldering hot international rocket-scientist grad-student climber hosting you on a whim via the Internet? Oddly enough, you can probably find that here. It might sound strange, but couch surfing (couchsurfing.org) locations around Boulder are a godsend. This slice of adventure sports paradise might be one of the only climbing towns in America where you can find any type of climber to put you up and take you out, all the while providing you with plush accommodations unique to this mountain town. Hotels are expensive, and there isn't any



SCOTT BENNETT ON ONE OF THE MOST LOVED ROUTES IN THE FRONT RANGE: THE NAKED EDGE.

camping close by, but a much-needed accommodation just opened in Boulder Canyon only a short walk from the walls (bouldermountainlodge.com).

[gear up]

Neptune Mountaineering (neptune-mountaineering.com, 303-499-8866) has been an indispensable fixture in the Boulder climbing scene since 1973, when Gary Neptune set up shop, fixing ski and climbing boots and putting edges on wooden skis. In 2013 Gary sold Neptune to Backwoods Retail, but that hasn't affected the quality of this landmark. Offering

everything from alpine gear to all the modern amenities needed for a typical Colorado outing, they have a selection that will handle your addiction. But the real beauty of Neptune lies in those desperate moments when you are in need of some local beta, help finding a partner, or forgot your shoes and crashpad in a friend's car. All of these are easily fixable with their social climate and cheap day rentals.

[kill time]

Boulder is also a helluva place for a rest day. Enjoy gems like The Laughing Goat Coffeehouse (thelaughinggoat.com) where you can catch music any

night of the week, grab some Internet, or relax to a much-deserved PBR tall-boy on the patio. The Boulder Public Library (boulderlibrary.org, 303-441-3100) is one of the town's best assets. With free Internet and a location over Boulder Creek across the street from downtown, it's a prime place for beta research. As for gyms, choose your poison of the Boulder Rock Club (boulderrockclub.com), Movement Climbing + Fitness (movementboulder.com), The Spot Boulder Gym (thespotgym.com), or the new mega complex Earth Treks (earthtreksclimbing.com) in Golden.

ROUTES

THE 10 BEST 4-STAR ROUTES AS RANKED BY MOUNTAIN PROJECT USERS

Direct Route (5.6 R)

First Flatiron, 10 pitches
Flatirons

"Fun, easy, long. Although protection is sparse, it didn't feel too exposed. The two eye bolts on the first pitch were well-placed, the face is fairly low-angle, and the friction is fantastic."

The Bastille Crack (5.7)

The Bastille, 5 pitches
Eldorado Canyon

"I pooped my pants on pitch two. I wish I were kidding."

The Yellow Spur (5.9)

Redgarden Wall, 6 pitches
Eldorado Canyon

"If you're going to climb this route, skip the traverse on the crux pitch and head straight up on the 10a/b section. The tricky section is very short and more of a balancey, hidden move than a pumpfest. Awesome exposure and fun climbing high on Redgarden Wall. What more could you ask for?"

Lust (5.10c/d)

Tarot Wall
Boulder Canyon

"Really fun climb. It can't be 10d. I led it in flip-flops with only two falls, and I'm not that badass."

Archangel (5.12c)

Lost Angel, 2 pitches
Upper Dream Canyon

"This is an ultra-classic line! Best 12c I've done, and one of the best pitches in the area. I feel fortunate to have had the chance to climb the route with the current modern hardware. Big thanks to Chris Weidner for taking the time and effort to clean and retro-bolt this beauty. He did a perfect job."

The Naked Edge (5.11a/b)

Redgarden Wall, 6 pitches
Eldorado Canyon

"The exposure and position are some of the best on the Front Range in my opinion, and the climbing...I just love that chimney pitch! Just enough gear, but not too many options. It's a classic for sure!"

Global Gorilla (5.12c)

Animal World, 3 pitches
Boulder Canyon

"Only led the first pitch, but what a wonderful pitch with different types of moves all the way! From the left side of the arête, clip the bolt before committing to the move out onto the arête. A sunny day, good friends, and climbing like this are what it's all about."

Milk Bone (5.13a)

Dinosaur Rock
Flatirons

"Killer sustained climbing on a long, proud wall. Unusual movement, good rock, nice approach. If you like 13a climbing, don't miss this one."

Hagan's Wall (V4-5)

Cloud Shadow
Flagstaff

"This is an incredible problem with interesting holds. Most people start with both feet on the smaller of two blocks, but a direct start, which I couldn't do, makes the problem harder and seems to be the full line."

Country Club Crack (5.11c)

Castle Rock, 2 pitches
Boulder Canyon

"Best crack I've been on in the 'Radbro.' I, for one, liked the opening move...but the jams are where it's at. So comfy. Great link and lowers to the ground with an 80m rope."

LOCAL FAVORITE

"**Freeway**, the 5.0 easiest way up the Second Flatiron. It's a classic moderate/scramble, starting right off the trail and going up the broad face (wherever you want to go, choose your own adventure) and running along a low-angle exposed spine with great views of the city below. Also, it's rarely crowded, and there's no rappelling or downclimbing needed; you just step off back to the trail. Partway along the spine section, you can drop down off the ridge to the Compound bouldering area, a long traverse, and get in some laps. But best of all, when they're in season, have a handful of the wild raspberries that grow down on the ledge." —MATT SAMET

POWERED BY

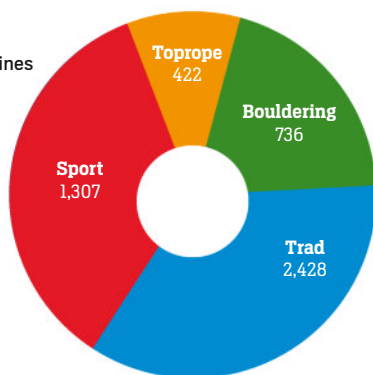


*Stats are for the immediate Boulder area. Get route beta, photos, and topos at mountainproject.com/boulder.

METRICS

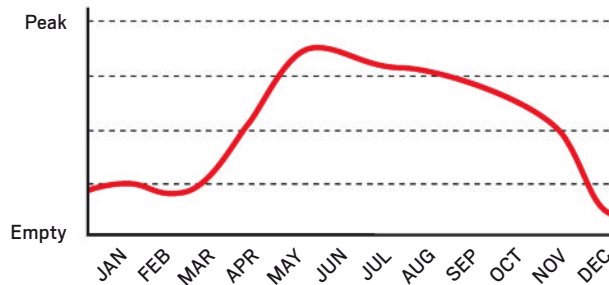
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A playground for all disciplines



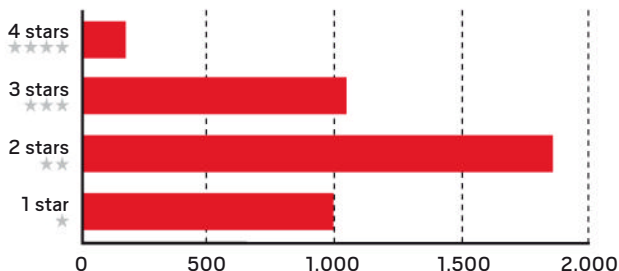
[season]

Nine months of primetime



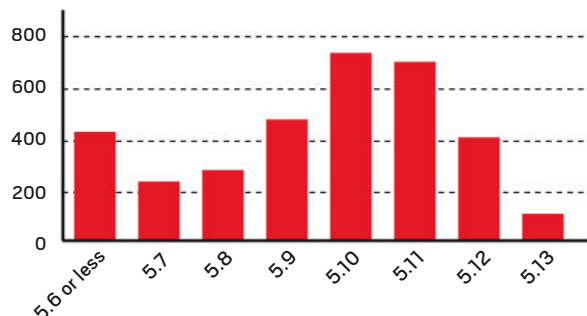
[quality]

Never-ending value



[difficulty]

5.10 climbers shine



Main Squeeze

Conquer compression climbing with this authoritative advice

BY CHRIS SCHULTE



IN THE LAST FEW YEARS, “compression” has become a buzzword in the climbing world, denoting a specialized style that involves squeezing, friction-dependent slapping, and chest-centric movements. Because this type of climbing involves more pushing muscles than pulling, many climbers struggle with the subtle strength required because the majority of their power comes from overdeveloped backs and biceps. Routes with big squeezes, similar to mantels or slabs, have a reputation for being sandbagged and esoteric, and you might find that a slopey V3 requires the same thoughtful approach and try hard as a steep V11. However, there are a few basic techniques that can refine and upgrade your compression skills. Combine that with a confident mental approach, and you’ll be hugging your way up the blankest features out there.

THE MOVE

[Make a plan]

Despite the straightforward appearance of many compression climbs, a closer survey often reveals a dearth of “real holds,” e.g., crimps, jugs, sidepulls, etc. Distances between the barely there holds can be large, and footholds can often be inconspicuous. Inspect the rock closely to figure out the distance of the spans, the exact placement of the smears, the ideal heel and toe hooks, and the location of any positive holds. One of the most important rules to follow is the typical three points of contact. With face and crack climbs, we often have to break this rule, but with compression, three points on is important because the holds themselves are usually crap. Making a foot move means you need both hands activated. Body tension and core strength (especially when your frame is stretched out) are essential, as well as open-hand forearm strength for the high number of slopers.

[Develop your mindset]

From the moment you pull on, you will be fully engaged in a fight to the finish. Having this mentality is crucial for any hard climb you attempt, but it’s even more important for compression-centric lines, where one microsecond of hesitation or relaxation in your core can cause you to lose body tension and fall off. Often a squeeze line will afford none of the typical climbing luxuries, like a place to take a breath or shake out, and you’ll be wrapped up in a slap battle for the entirety of the route. You might be stretched out too far or too tensed up in that extension to breathe or relax the slightest bit. Your core is working hard, your forearms are melting down fast from the pumpy grips, and all your muscles and connective tissues are screaming at full reach, so you need a mental reservoir that’s set for intense battle mode.

[Train]

This can be really simple or seemingly impossible. You can unplug the refrigerator and carry it around your yard, or get a landscaping job placing boulders all day. As usual, the best way to train for this style is to immerse yourself in it. Repetition, exposure, experimentation, and experience will help you develop the awareness needed to execute efficient movement. System boards can be remarkably useful for their grid-like sets of identical holds. Set one up with a pile of slopers and pinches, try out different angles, and change up holds and the overall wall with a goal to mimic climbing a bare refrigerator block. Believe it or not, buldering can also be a useful diversion. The square-cut, holdless forms of smooth concrete can yield some fierce moves. Of course, nothing substitutes real rock when it comes to training the body to fight with delicacy and the mind to switch from fearsome to calm flow and back again.

[Fine-tune body position]

Coordination is the most important part of compression climbing. Every part of your body must work together as fluidly and in sync as possible; each limb is invested in your overall strength and reach. Think of squeeze climbing like swimming: Each body part works together to keep you afloat. Arms and hands are squeezing, legs squeeze and then kick to get hips shifting in the direction of the move, everything reaches max effort at once to make a strong throw, hand lands accurately, and all at once everything must immediately squeeze as hard as possible again. Obviously each move is different, but if you can coordinate each foot, leg, parts of your core, and hands to work at full capacity together in unison, you’ll start to master the subtle nuances and start sending.

[Perfect technique]

This type of climbing requires delicate dancing and other times a hammer-like power and strength. Mileage, experience, and the following simple points will help you know when to dance and when to hammer. The most common mistake is approaching the moves too directly, with the body too centered. This is a natural response to the appearance of the line, and occasionally it’s the only way to do it, but most of the time you’ll want to keep your weight and your engaged body on one side of the squeeze or the other. Try to keep moving back and forth over the centerline, shifting your weight from side to side to maximize the foot and hand holds, with as much coordination as you can muster. This will help create a more stable place from which to make each move upward. When used properly, this can also increase your span, another pivotal aspect of compression.

[Next level]

Timing is paramount, and a speedy inner dialogue should be asking questions like: Am I stable enough to move effectively? Have I positioned myself correctly so I can reach the next hand/foot placement? Is it time to gun for it? Making these tiny calls and executing them at the right time are key for progression; so much of success depends on that balance of exertion and harmony of movement. Lastly, pay close attention to your legs. Instead of just hugging in a dead hang from your arms with your little legs desperately scrabbling for purchase, use the biggest, most powerful muscles in your body by looking for good heel hooks, toe hooks, and hand-foot matches. You’ll cover much more ground in a more efficient way. For big reaches, think about switching a heel hook to a toe hook to gain inches on your span.



BODY TYPE

Success with compression climbing can be dependent on body size. In the legendary forest of Fontainebleau, France, where problems of this style abound, developers even have an addendum to the grading scale: morpho, which is short for morphological and pertains to the structure of the climber and his or her individual features. Some of the most difficult compression problems I've done took a great period of time for me to figure out my own beta—I wasn't tall enough to do the standard sequence, so I had to work out a series of tough alternative moves. Be prepared to watch and listen for beta from others, but always be ready to think outside the "what everybody else does on this one" box to find the right method for you.

PHOTO BY JULIE ELLISON

Compression Progression

Being short

This is the ultimate problem with compression climbing: morphology, aka body size and arm span (see Body Type). I've climbed up to V14, but sometimes you just can't reach. Often I have to do many extra foot moves, which turns the slopers into time bombs when you have to hold on twice as long. Don't take it too seriously—there will be impossible problems. A huge reach makes a huge difference. But remember that compression climbing is already a dead art form if you're not doing it for the love of the features and the moves.

Injury

This type of climbing can put strain on areas that are used in a more straightforward way with other types of climbing, namely the shoulders, wrists, and elbows. Compression puts more impact on these joints, and it can be impact at odd angles. Make sure to listen to any tweaky body parts, rest, ice, administer ibuprofen, and use compression accordingly. The repetitive motion of slapping blank arêtes can wreak havoc on your sensitive and complex shoulder and wrist joints.

Conditions

Like any problem that has a lot of slopers or large, open-hand holds, conditions are crucial to sending. Wait for cool, crisp, dry days to maximize friction for both your hands and your feet. If you're sliming off during any given session, save your strength for another day with better weather.

Common mistakes

Not using your legs and not leaning to one side enough. Squeezing gets better and somewhat easier when you lean against it, similar to a layback. Most climbing is based on footwork, but compression is all about full legwork—from your toes to your butt. Get those stems involved as much as possible. This isn't really a common mistake, but it's the hardest part to master: shifting your state of mind from subtle and introspective to angry, crushing fierceness—and then turning it off again in one breath.



CHRIS SCHULTE HAS BEEN A CLIMBER AND PROLIFIC FIRST ASCENSIONIST FOR 20 YEARS. SEEKING OUT REFRIGERATORS TO HUG HAS TAKEN HIM FROM THE FRONT RANGE OF COLORADO TO FONTAINEBLEAU.

Do the Legwork

CONDITION YOUR LOWER BODY FOR STEEPS, SLABS, AND STEMMING

By Kyle Ward



MANY CLIMBERS CAN quickly rattle off a number of excuses for skipping leg day in the weight room—“they will get bulky and weigh me down” and “this couch is too comfortable to leave” are favorites—but there are plenty of reasons why you should focus on strengthening your base. Having a strong, powerful, and flexible lower half gives you more endurance, allows you to do bigger, harder moves, and exponentially improves footwork and thus technique. Strong legs are crucial for long routes, where you might end up standing on your feet all day. Rope-stretching slab pitches or long stemming corners will make even a seasoned alpinist’s legs burn, and sport climbers need sturdy calves and hamstrings to really toe-in on the steeps. And with any type of climbing, the more weight you can put on your feet and legs, the longer your comparatively weaker arms and upper body will last. We’ve compiled a collection of quick and simple exercises that will build your base and make you a better climber.

BASICS

[strength]

This is the basis of all workouts. Keep improving the highest amount of weight you can support in any given motion, and it will transfer to all other facets of training.

[power]

Involves strength, but also includes explosiveness and how fast you can do dynamic moves.

[flexibility]

Adding this to strength opens up a whole new world of moves; includes being strong in end ranges of motion.

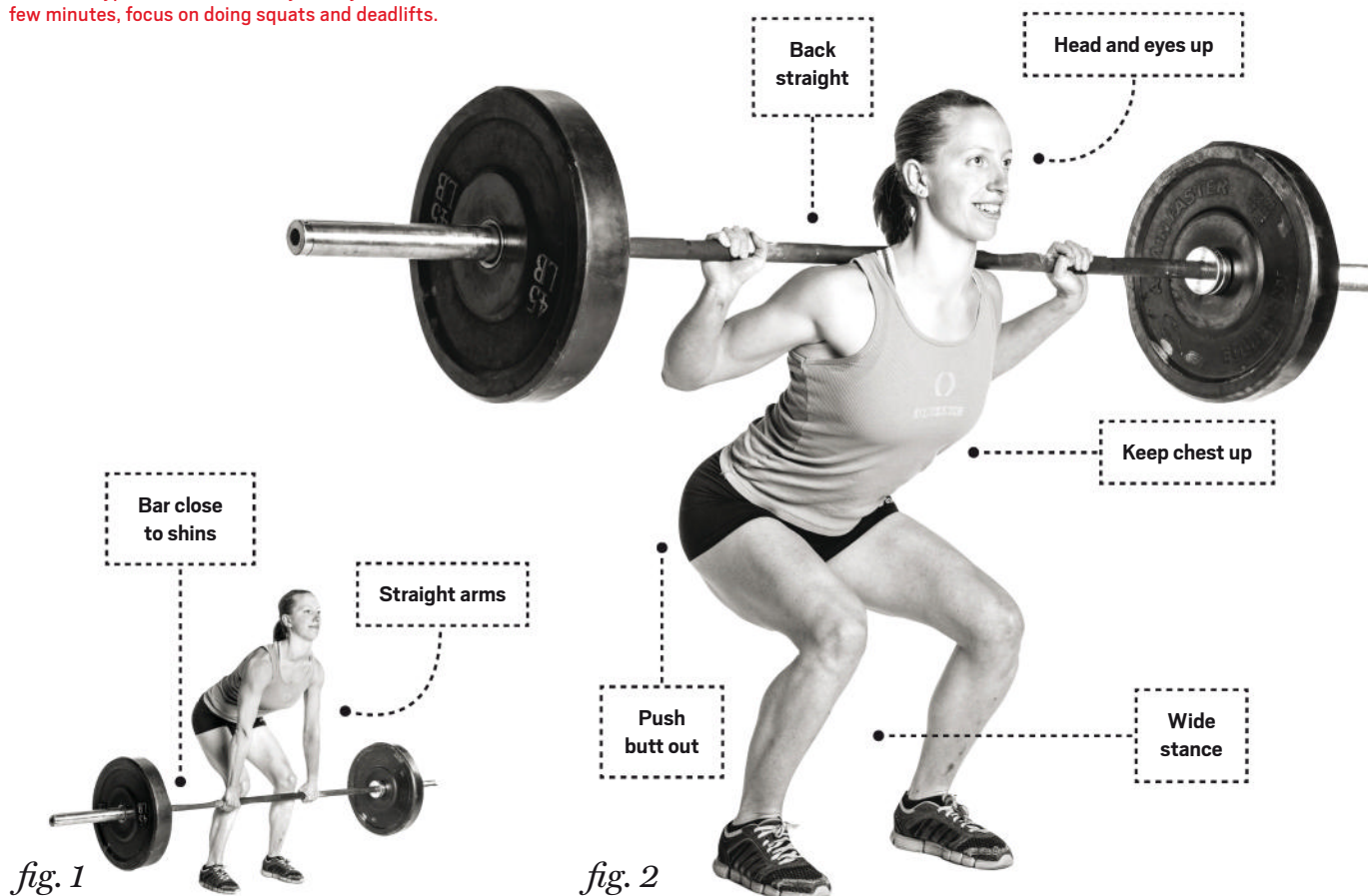
[endurance]

Your legs have a pump-clock, too, and slabtastic pitches can cause that burn and shake that will make you want to take. Train for those on-fire moments to stay cool under pressure.

Universal Lifts: Squat and Deadlift

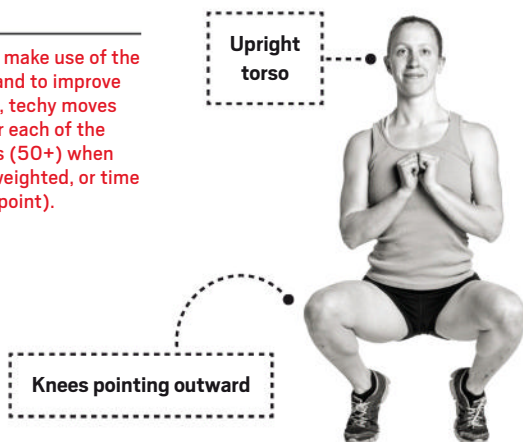
No matter your pursuit, the squat (fig. 2) and the deadlift (fig. 1) are the two most fundamental and comprehensive lower body exercises for athletes. Each exercise works every muscle from your calves to your glutes to your core, and they’re both important for all types of movement. If you only have a few minutes, focus on doing squats and deadlifts.

✓ These exercises can be done with no weight (aim for high reps or time), but 3 sets of 10 reps with a challenging but doable weight will build strength quickly. If using weights, pick something that’s about 70% of your max.



Toeing In

Increase calf and toe strength to make use of the smallest nubbins on overhangs, and to improve balance and stability for delicate, techy moves on slabby and vertical terrain. For each of the listed exercises, aim for high reps (50+) when unweighted, 3 sets of 10 when weighted, or time (30 to 45 seconds as a starting point).



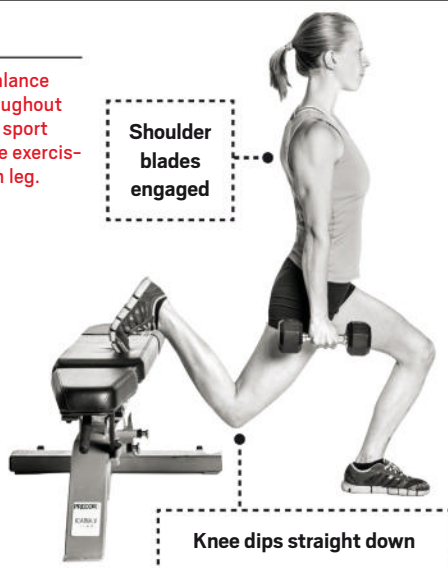
Catcher calf raises: Bend down into a baseball catcher's position, knees pointed slightly outward. Raise heels up and down in a smooth, fluid motion. Make it easier by using one hand on the ground (for balance only), or make it harder by holding a light dumbbell or kettlebell at your chest.

Calf raises: Find a curb, stair, or stack a couple weight plates on the ground. Balls of the feet should be on the stair with the back half of your foot hanging off. Drop your feet to feel a stretch in the calf, and then press up through your toes till you're on your tip-toes. Hold weight for a strength challenge, or do one leg at a time to focus on balance.

Continuous calf jumps: On flat ground, jump up and down using just your toes; only bend your knees slightly and don't let your heels touch the ground.

High-Stepping

This move requires a combination of balance and flexibility, along with strength throughout the entire range of motion. Boulderers, sport climbers, and traddies will all find these exercises helpful. Aim for 3 sets of 15 for each leg.



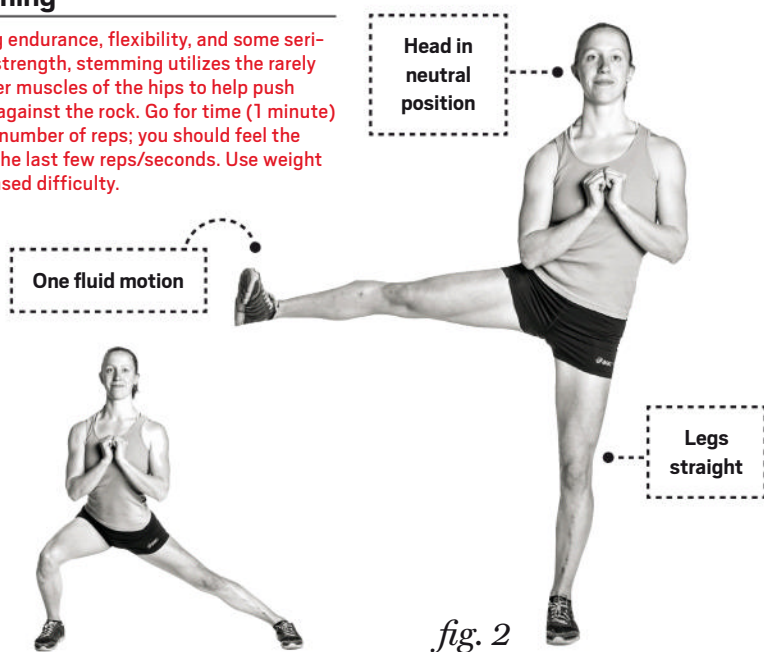
Weighted box steps: Find a box or ledge at shin height and step up with the left leg, bring the right up, step down with the left leg first, then right. Repeat by stepping with the right leg. Make sure to put your whole foot on the box. Add weight, include a calf raise at the top of the step, or find a higher box for more challenge.

Bulgarian lunges: Using a bench placed behind you, extend one leg backward and place the top of the foot so it's resting on the flat surface (rest on just toes to make it slightly harder). With a dumbbell in each hand, lunge forward until your front knee reaches 90°, being careful that it doesn't extend past your toes. Lunge with front leg farther away from the bench (rear leg will be straighter) to increase the difficulty.

Hanging knee lifts: This is a core-intensive exercise, but it's excellent for hip flexor strength and overall flexibility. Hang from a bar and raise one or both knees toward your chest, going as high as possible. Alternate between keeping your knees together and spreading them wide for increased range of motion.

Stemming

Requiring endurance, flexibility, and some serious calf strength, stemming utilizes the rarely used outer muscles of the hips to help push outward against the rock. Go for time (1 minute) or a high number of reps; you should feel the burn for the last few reps/seconds. Use weight for increased difficulty.



Wall Sits: Many athletes dread this exercise, but it's ideal for pushing through the burn in a safe position while building leg endurance and mental fortitude. Find a wall and "sit" with your back against it and legs at 90°. Place a light weight plate on top of your thighs to up the challenge. Keep palms flat on the wall next to you, or rest them lightly in your lap—don't cheat by pushing on your legs or the wall!

Multi-directional lunges: Start standing, and keeping core tight and upper body upright, step forward into a lunge, back to start. With the same leg, step out at about 45°, back to start. Now step out straight to the side, back to start. Repeat with the other leg.

Core-to-toe side lunges: From a standing position, lunge out to the right, keeping toes pointed forward and the left leg completely straight (fig. 1). Get as deep into the lunge as you can, then spring back up to standing, and without resting your right leg on the ground, lift it up as high as you can out to the side, keeping it as straight as possible (fig. 2). Do this without weight at first, working to make the step out of the lunge and leg lift as fluid and powerful as possible.



INGREDIENTS

- ▶ 1 cup coarse, gluten-free bread crumbs
- ▶ 1/2 cup white rice flour
- ▶ 1/4 cup almond milk
- ▶ 1/4 cup ground almonds
- ▶ Pinch of ground nutmeg
- ▶ 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- ▶ 2 eggs, lightly beaten
- ▶ 1 large ripe banana



THE PERFECT BREAKFAST is quick to make and delivers long-lasting energy. Major

bonus points for being tasty, fun to eat, and not so heavy that it hits your gut like a brick and turns your redpoint attempt into a nap in the back of the van (we're looking at you, biscuits and gravy!). Enter the perfect packable meal:

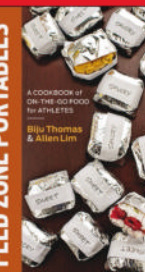
banana waffles! With a few tasty additions, these surprisingly portable squares of goodness can offer the complete nutritious breakfast package for climbers. One serving (a 2" x 2" square) is about 112 calories, with carbohydrates for quick energy, protein for slow-burning energy, and enough moisture to make them easy to digest. Personalize the recipe with honey, Nutella, peanut butter, jelly, fruit, nuts—you name it. And if you're not a fan of gluten, good news because with rice flour and gluten-free bread crumbs, these are completely void of gluten. Wrap them up to eat on the road, tuck away in your pack, or store them in the fridge for the week. And no excuses about being too short on time to cook—they only take 20 minutes to make.

Waffles!

Fuel up with this customizable, portable snack to eat any time

BY KYLE WARD

FEED ZONE PORTABLES



FILL UP!

*Republished with permission of VeloPress from *Feed Zone Portables*. Try more recipes at feedzonecookbook.com.

DIRECTIONS

- 1 Prep by heating up your waffle iron.
- 2 Place the dry ingredients into a food processor and pulse to mix.
- 3 Crack the eggs into a small bowl, add almond milk, and stir briskly. Put this into the food processor, add the banana, and pulse. Batter should be smooth and somewhat dense.
- 4 Pour the batter into the waffle iron until the squares fill up, keeping in mind that the batter will expand when pressed. Cook until the outside of the waffle feels crisp. Repeat this process.
- 5 Cut into 2" x 2" squares, touch up with your favorite toppings or spreads, and enjoy, or let them cool completely before wrapping individually.

Note: If you have nut allergies, you can easily remove the almonds and change the milk without sacrificing taste.

NUTRITION FACTS

per serving (1/8 of total amount)

Energy **112 cal**

Carbs **17g**

Fat **3g**

Fiber **1g**

Sodium **60mg**

Protein **4g**

Breakfast of Champions

You're going to eat a lot of breakfast over the course of your climbing life. From comp crushers to trad enthusiasts, eight pro climbers give us more ideas for fueling the send.



Hazel Findlay

"EGGS! Always the best breakfast. With

veggies, on their own, with fruit, boiled, scrambled, poached. Mixed with banana and desiccated coconut to make nice, filling pancakes on a rest day. On a really cold day, boil two, eat one, and take the second in your pocket to keep your hands warm."



Alex Honnold

"I used to love egg scrambles for breakfast,

but now I'm more into cereal. Or granola with some fruit, hemp hearts, and almond milk. Some kind of wholesome, non-dairy cereal concoction is my favorite."



Meagan Martin

"Breakfast is my favorite meal, and it's

a toss-up between eggs with cheese and Sriracha and French toast! Coffee is a must; I prefer a nice cappuccino."



Alex Megos

"Good German bread with quark (a kind

of thick yogurt) and jam/honey, fruit, and lots of tea. Sometimes as well I do an omelet with cheese and ham."



Mayan Smith-Gobat

"Fresh fruit (preferably

berries and bananas), natural

low-fat yogurt (quark when I am in Europe), and some cereal with nuts and seeds. I am also a big fan of smoothies with fruit, yogurt, juice, and a little protein powder. And I do really like eggs, so for an extravagant breakfast, add some bacon and fresh fruit. If I am looking at a really long day, I throw in a real treat, like cinnamon rolls or French *pain au chocolat*! Breakfast is the best meal of the day, so enjoy it!"



Jonathan Siegrist

"Most days, on the road or otherwise, I

cook up veggies like broccoli, onions, carrots, chard, mushrooms, or asparagus, and then scramble in eggs or just fry a couple eggs on the side. Goat cheese and honey has also been a favorite morning routine since my last trip to France."



Nina Williams

"I usually like a fast, no-hassle breakfast, so

I'll cook up some turkey kielbasa or bacon and pair it with avocado slices. I also like to make huge batches of oatmeal banana pancakes to grab on the go throughout the week. No matter what I eat, black coffee is a must for breakfast time."



Cedar Wright

"The eggadilla! Butter the frying pan,

crack two eggs, break yolks, put a tortilla on the eggs as they cook, and gently press down. The tortilla sticks to the eggs as they harden so you can flip it over, add cheese, fold in half, and you have clean-up-free deliciousness!"



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GEAR

Salewa
Speed Ascent



BIG REVIEW

Approach Shoes, **p.36**

Find out what separates these kicks, a gear category completely unique to climbing, from run-of-the-mill light hikers and trailrunners. Plus, the five best models for this year.

THE KIT

Portable Power,
p.38

TESTED

Latest and Greatest
Gear Obsessions, **p.39**

The First Step

Conquer trail and technical approaches with these 5 approach shoes

BY JULIE ELLISON



They carried you 10 miles on a trail into the backcountry of the Canadian Rockies for some low-angle scrambling, they slipped off and on a dozen times at your local after-work crag the next week, and by that weekend they were hopping from boulder to boulder on an alpine pebble-wrestling mission. One thing almost every climbing adventure has in common is the approach shoe, a beloved and reliable mode of transportation to your destination—no matter the rocky/root-covered/muddy/scree-filled obstacles that might stand in the way. For more than six months of a hot summer, a snowy winter, and a soaking-wet spring, our testers vetted almost a dozen pairs of climbing-specific approach shoes, light hikers, and trailrunners to find the best picks for trad-, sport-, alpine-, and boulder-loving climbers alike. From Spain to France to Canada to the U.S. and down to Mexico, we logged a few hundred miles, thousands of vertical feet, a handful of blisters, and countless hours of fun to bring you these five standouts that are fit for a variety of disciplines and distances.

SHOTS FROM THE FIELD...



La Sportiva Helios SR

\$125; sportiva.com



PERFORMANCE

"Lightweight trailrunner meets climbing shoe," one tester summed up pretty simply. We've long loved the Helios for its excellent performance while boulder-hopping in Boulder Canyon, Colorado, running up approach slabs in Red Rock, and on fourth class scrambles in the Tetons, and the simple addition of sticky rubber to the sole makes it twice as nice. In fact, we love it so much that we gave it an Editors' Choice Award (read more at climbing.com/editorschoice15). The "MorphoDynamic" EVA midsole is softer than other midsoles, and it molds to your individual foot shape almost immediately. None of our testers experienced blisters or even a single hot spot, and they praised the ultra-breathable AirMesh nylon for keeping feet dry and happy, especially in arid climates and on swampy slogs. Another upgrade: A slightly larger, beefier toe bumper protects feet from run-ins with roots and rocks on the descent. Note that these are minimalist shoes. "They're not ideal for long approaches with a heavy pack, but for anything moderate, these shoes can't be beat." Sizing note: These are quite low-profile and designed to fit snug, so most feet, especially high volume or high arches, were more comfortable with a half size up.

CONCLUSION

"Cover a light, zippy trailrunner in sticky rubber, and you get the Helios SR." A durable but breathable nylon-mesh upper and large toe bumper protect your feet without sweating them out, making these ideal for every climbing discipline during the nine months that aren't winter.

BOTTOM LINE

Sticky Quickness

Mammut Sloper Low

\$109; mammut.ch



PERFORMANCE

Don't judge the Sloper solely from its stout appearance—it's way more agile than it looks. "They're supportive and surprisingly light; I've never worn a shoe this light that lets me carry heavy packs long distances," one tester said. At about 12.5 oz. per shoe, the Sloper cuts weight but not versatility and durability thanks to a board-lasted design that creates a sturdy, semi-rigid base. The full leather upper offered protection when wading through rolling talus in the Rocky Mountains, and the specialized velours leather layer is rough (instead of smooth, like nubuck), which allows for more airflow between the fibers, providing toughness and breathability at the same time. A second layer of leather around the bottom of the foot and at the toe increased durability in high-wear spots. "Because of the combination of a minimal weight but loads of support, I always choose these for long-approach and/or heavy-pack days, especially when it's both." Extra padding around the low-top ankle added to the comfort factor. The Mammutec sole's sticky rubber combined with a horizontal lug pattern offered excellent purchase on rock, trail, and dirt, and testers found that "these climb just as well as techier kicks due to a rigid but light feel."

CONCLUSION

A stylish approach shoe that delivers tons of support, the Sloper is excellent all-around and can be used for technical climbing, scrambling, and trail hiking, as well as romping around town without sounding the teched-out siren.

BOTTOM LINE

Lightweight Support

WHAT EXACTLY IS AN APPROACH SHOE? ➔ From duct taped flips to burly, over-the-ankle boots, we've seen almost every type of footwear headed to the crag, but here are a few characteristics we look for in a superior approach shoe. 1) Sticky rubber, meaning the sole has a softer rubber compound, similar to climbing shoes, that conforms to deformities in the rock. 2) A partially lugged tread, which gives optimal purchase on the trail. 3) A "climbing zone," which is a flat, usually smooth area of rubber on the underside of the toe and inside of the forefoot for edging performance on more technical terrain. 4) Burly but breathable upper (including a toe bumper) that protects feet from loose talus but isn't a sweat box. 5) To-the-toe lacing that allows wearers to dial in fit for techier moves. 6) Full-support midsole for lugging heavy loads lots of miles. Bonuses: dot-pattern rubber, waterproofing, and fun colors. —JULIE ELLISON

Arc'teryx Alpha FL

\$190 (non-GTX), \$220 (GTX); arcteryx.com



PERFORMANCE

Yes, Arc'teryx is making shoes! No, their, ahem, approach, is not like anything you've seen before. The construction and design are comprised of an inner liner and an outer shell. With two models, the FL is fixed inside, but in the pricier Alpha FL² model, you can change out the liner depending on performance needs (more insulation, waterproofing, breathability, etc.). We tested the less pricey Alpha FL and its built-in, lightly padded mesh liner and found it performed well on slabs and low-angle surfaces. The Vibram "approach" sole has the climber's perfect trifecta of large lugs in the back for braking on the downhill, dot rubber in the mid and forefoot for excellent purchase on slabs, and a flat edging platform beneath the toes. (A standard, fully lugged "hiking" sole is also available.) **"Complete comfort at first wear thanks to the mesh liner with thin foam, and the super-beefy sole package provided support for heavy loads and protection from trail obstacles."** Testers liked the rounded heel, which allowed for a more ergonomic foot strike and decreased the pounding that feet and legs take on steep and fast descents. Burl caveat: If you like an agile, precise feel underfoot, these may feel a bit clunky, as one tester noted.

CONCLUSION

You wouldn't expect such beefy, sturdy shoes to be so comfortable from the get-go, but the padded inner lining and midsole offer ample support and make them easy to wear for all lengths of approach-es and all weights of packs.

BOTTOM LINE

Most Versatile

Salewa Speed Ascent

\$140; salewa.com



PERFORMANCE

A radically curved midsole sets these shoes apart from every other shoe in the test—and every other shoe on the market. Two proprietary technologies create an upturned shape: Take-Off construction places the toe higher than the rest of the foot, and Vibram's RGS (Rollingait System) creates a semi-rigid, bowed-up profile through the midsole. "The aggressive rocker propels you through your stride from heel strike to toe-off—unlike any shoe I've ever worn," one tester said after climbing in Arizona, Colorado, and Utah with the Speed Ascents. "You feel faster, and your legs and feet get way less tired on trail, meaning you can go longer and be fresher when it's time to climb." Plus, the natural forward roll of the shoe reduces impact on knees, ankles, and feet on the descent. For anything on the beaten path (trail, road, etc.), testers found these kicks were top-notch. However, what makes these shoes ideal for speedy hiking is exactly what makes them less than ideal for technical terrain. "The upturned toe and curved sole prevent any type of precise placement while boulder-hopping or moving up entrance slabs." With a second daisy chain lacing system placed lower on the foot, testers had two options to get a snug and secure fit.

CONCLUSION

Excellent for running, peakbagging, and any type of trail travel, **these have a one-of-a-kind rocker design that helps you get there faster with less fatigue,** but they're not meant for steep or technical terrain.

BOTTOM LINE

On-Trail Speed

Scarpa Crux Canvas

\$109; scarpa.com



PERFORMANCE

"I wear these to work, on the approach, then climb up to 5.6 or 5.7," said one tester after scampering around on some of Boulder's classic free-soloing terrain: The Dome in Boulder Canyon and on the First, Second, and Third Flatirons. **"Any time getting there involves fourth or low-fifth class, I reach for the Crux, and the canvas version means I can comfortably wear them in any climate."** To-the-toe lacing dials in a perfectly snug fit, and a small network of forefoot webbing with Kevlar offers increased support by connecting directly to the laces at midfoot, so when testers cranked the shoes down, they "could feel the whole upper being wrapped tighter around the foot." Add a sticky rubber sole with a flat climbing zone at the toe and a burly toe rand, and you've got the best climbers in the test, from jamming and edging to slabs and choss. A canvas upper with mesh in key zones (around the ankle and on the comfortably padded tongue) made the Crux incredibly breathable when feet were putting off a lot of heat, but the tough canvas material also provided plenty of protection and durability for excessive rock abrasion. Get a leather (slightly less breathable, slightly more durable) version for \$6 more.

CONCLUSION

These are the closest to technical climbing shoes in the test, with **a long-lasting upper that's breathable and easy to wear for hours at a time.** If you're going to be climbing in approach shoes (Tetons, Wind Rivers) or have any technical terrain ahead, these are the answer.

BOTTOM LINE

Best Climbers

Fully Charged

6 portable power solutions

BY JULIE ELLISON

PUREGEAR POWERBANK

"It slips right into my pocket just like my phone; plus, I can charge mine and my partner's phones at the same time so we can keep taking rad shots of each other," one tester said. The Powerbank is roughly the same size as an iPhone 5 and holds about 40 extra hours of talk time in one charge. Two USB charging ports of varying speeds (a 1 amp "standard" and 2 amp "rapid charge") can power two small devices at once, or use the rapid charge port to refuel a tablet. Weighing in at only 6.4 oz., this sleek, small package adds almost negligible weight, and small lights on the unit indicate how much power it has so you don't have to guess.

\$60; pure-gear.com

GOAL ZERO FLIP 10 RECHARGER

Minimal fuss for this mini battery pack, which has a built-in USB plug that folds down to make the whole unit compact and streamlined. (This USB plug charges the Flip itself, but you still need a cord for your specific device.) "Keeping up with the many cords and wires for my electronics gives me a headache, so worrying about one less is excellent," one tester said after a month of carrying it from Utah to Texas to Colorado. With 2,600mAh (milliampere-hour, which is a unit of electric charge) of power, this device holds one full charge for a smartphone and can be recharged in about three hours from the wall. Other than the perfect pocket size of the Flip (similar to two tubes of lip balm), testers' favorite feature was the pass-through

charging capability, meaning you can charge the Flip and your phone at the same time. \$30; goalzero.com

BRUNTON REVOLT 9000

Rugged is the best adjective for this 12.5 oz. power bank that holds about six smartphone charges in its 9,000mAh lithium cell battery. The Revolt is coated in a silicone shell that protects it from moderate drops (we tested up to about four feet), and Vibram on the bottom gives it some purchase on slippery surfaces (read: on the dashboard of the car when testers drove down four-wheel-drive roads). Plus,

a small cover over the ports keeps dirt and the occasional water spray out. "The rubber coating and protective door mean I don't have to baby it," one tester said, "which is ideal for climbing's harsh environments." Includes one cable with three options: micro USB, Lightning, and 30-Pin. \$100; brunton.com

COBRA CPP 100

Affordable and portable solar power has been a game changer for outdoor enthusiasts who want to take devices with them, and this puts the energy source and the solar panel into a single lightweight unit. Testers found it held a little more than three smartphone charges or two tablet charges, and it can be charged from its panel or the wall. Weighing in at 6.2 oz., the CPP 100 is about the size of an iPhone 5 (slightly wider), and a handle allowed testers to hang it for optimal positioning in the sun. (Not big enough for a carabiner,

but testers used a girth-hitched sling.) An LED meter shows you how much juice is in the unit. \$60; cobra.com

GOAL ZERO YETI 1250

"Life-changing. Long trips will never be the same again!" As the big mamma jamma of portable power, the Yeti 1250 runs everything from a cell phone to a laptop to a mini fridge—yes, you can power a refrigerator with it. It's obviously not pocket-size—it's 103 lbs. and about the size of a big microwave, but one road-tripping tester used this large unit in her van when writing and photographing assignments that took her from Zion to Austin, Texas, powering two laptops, more than two dozen camera battery charges, and even a small blender for smoothies. Charge it from the wall in about 18 hours, or chain it up with Goal Zero's solar panel options so you always have juice as long as the sun is shining. Two large handles

and an included roll cart make moving the unit "easy as can be." It's quite pricey, but the seemingly endless power is ideal for life on the road. \$1,400; goalzero.com

GREENLIGHT PLANET SUN KING PRO

Powered by an included solar panel or from a wall outlet, this lantern-meets-power source provides three levels of light output, and you can recharge small electronics from it. The easily removable stand allowed testers to configure it in a variety of positions for reading, cooking, or illuminating a whole tent, and a strap on the back was great for hanging the light from a tree. Testers lauded the solar charge indicator ("Why doesn't every solar company do this?!"), which uses a digital LED meter to show you on a scale of 1 to 5 how optimized the solar panel placement is. Each charge provides 45 hours of light. \$45; greenlightplanet.com



Field Notes

THE LATEST AND GREATEST FROM OUR DILIGENT TESTERS

By Julie Ellison



[Rugged but pajama-soft bottoms]

STONEWEAR DESIGNS
COMPASS CAPRI

Ladies, if you want an alternative to the skin-tight leggings craze in climbing, look no further than this ultra-cozy but high-performing three-quarter-length pant. A fully elastic and wide waistband layers under a harness comfortably, and with zero buttons or zippers, bathroom breaks while climbing were straightforward and seamless. Testers found that despite the very soft feel of the fabric (“I sleep in these a few nights a week after evening gym sessions”), it held up to butt-scooting down boulders in Chattanooga, Tennessee, and hip scumming in Clear Creek Canyon, Colorado. Eighty-eight percent nylon provides durability and a soft feel, and 12% spandex let testers high-step, stem, and back-step. They were breathable and airy in a sweat-filled gym, preventing moisture buildup (aka swamp butt). **\$82; stoneweardesigns.com**



[Ultimate camp and crag shoe]

PAKEMS CLASSIC LOW-TOP

“The world would be a better place if all shoes felt like Pakems,” one tester said after basically not taking them off for three months, climbing and camping throughout Tennessee, Utah, and Colorado. “They’re as comfortable as a slipper, but they have a decently sticky and lugged sole to offer purchase on rock and trail. And they’ve proven to be very durable to boot.” A touch of synthetic insulation keeps feet warm in shoulder seasons, while a water-resistant DWR coating and ripstop nylon outer provide protection from the elements and abrasion. Each pair of Pakems comes with its own carrying bag with compression straps to help it pack down to about the size of a 32 oz. water bottle. While we don’t recommend doing technical approaches or descents in these, testers loved them as crag/belay shoes: “Get off a route; your feet are aching from those downsized climbing shoes. Wear them all day and then at the fire at night.” **\$60 (low-top), \$65 (high-top); pakems.com**



[Fully featured lightweight alpine pack]

GRIVEL DRUS 30

Usually the bottom weight category of packs means they are stripped down and minimalist, but the Drus 30 breaks that trend with tons of extra widgets but not extra ounces. “Even with the loads of climber-friendly features, it’s still one of the lightest packs in the 30-liter category,” one tester said after multi-pitch ice climbing and high-country missions in the Northeast and Quebec. “And its featherweight doesn’t come at the expense of durability.” At almost 2 lbs., it includes ice tool attachments (double as ski carriers), compression straps, side pockets, top lid, crampon pouch, beefily padded shoulder straps and waistbelt (which also features a handy stash pocket). One tester also lauded the tapered, streamlined design, which “worked really well in chimneys and slots, cinching compactly for a long and variable conditions day to adapt to different loads.” **\$115; libertymountain.com**



[Smart trigger-finger design]

BLACK DIAMOND
INDEX ASCENDER

Most ascenders, so named because they enable you to ascend a rope, position the release lever (which you flick to take pressure off the rope) to be operated with the thumb, which can be awkward and inefficient when you need to down-jug or remove the units. The Index places the release lever so it can be activated with your pointer finger, similar to the trigger of a gun, which led to “seamless operation, less frustration, and faster movement,” one tester said after taking a pair to El Potrero Chico for 40 pitches of jugging. Whether you’re big walling or following a hard alpine route, this feature is especially great for small-pawed testers, who in the past struggled to operate thumb-centric designs because the release lever sits so far away from the handle. The Index is lightweight at 7 oz. per unit, and an ergonomic grip with dual-density rubber (hard part for support and soft part for comfort) offers a solid hold without fatigue. **\$80; blackdiamondequipment.com**

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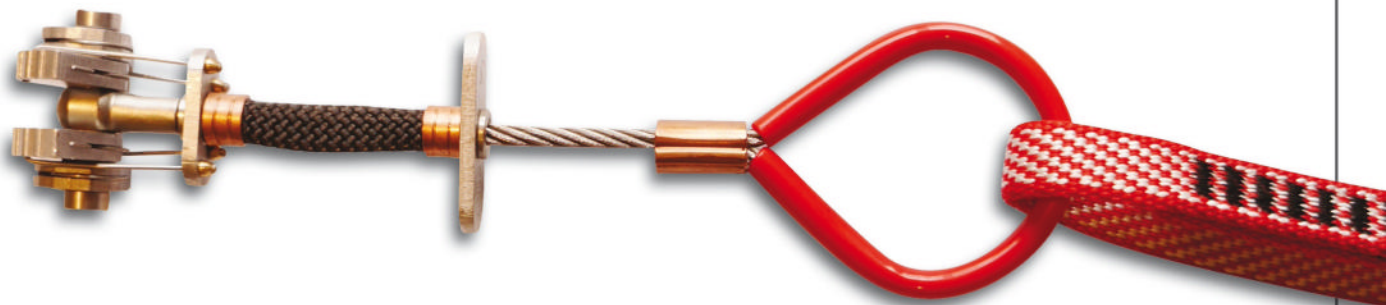


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CLINICS



IN SESSION

Ultimate Skin Care Handbook, **p.42**

Skin care is paramount for a serious climber. Find out why you need to have these seven items in your kit—yes, even that sanding block!

HEALTH

Injury-Free Movement, **p.44**

BEGIN HERE

Double Figure Eight Knot, **p.46**

Ultimate Skin Care Handbook

BY CHRIS SCHULTE



MAKE BAD SKIN A THING OF THE PAST WITH THIS COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE

You train your heart, your lungs, your brain, and your muscles, but you won't get far without the health and strength of your biggest organ: the cutis, Latin for a giant sack that keeps everything inside, otherwise known as your skin. It's part of the integumentary system with your hair and nails, and this fickle and ever-changing body part is your primary connection to the rock and an important variable in your climbing experience. After 20 years of bouldering, I've gathered a set of guidelines on how to take proper care of your skin for climbing. Whether you're blessed with hard, smooth calluses and tips, or plagued by constant shredding and splits, keep in mind these few basic tenets of preventive care and post-traumatic restoration.

CLEANLINESS

Hand hygiene is step one in maintaining properly functioning skin. Start your day and your climbing session with a thorough hand washing, and keep your mitts free of grease and oils while climbing. Don't put down that lunchtime avocado sandwich and immediately paw at the polished edges of the project du jour. You'll waste a good go, grease the holds, and probably lose some friends. Skin varies greatly from person to person: Some are naturally drier while some walk around with constantly sweaty palms. Assess where you are in the spectrum and act accordingly: Dry hands should focus on adding moisture when cleaning (think: moisturizing soaps), while oily hands should focus on removing that oil with standard bar soaps, which will degrease much better. (The main difference between cheap and expensive soap is fragrance; find a soap that doesn't claim any moisturizing capabilities.) Wash with hot water, which cuts grease and cleanses more thoroughly, then rinse with cold.

DIFFERENT SKIN FOR DIFFERENT ROCK

Your skin responds differently to each type of rock. Several factors are at play here, including temperature and humidity, but the texture and grain of the stone have a major impact. The more time you spend climbing in a particular area, the more the unique rock will "farm" your skin into the appropriate state. After a week of climbing, you'll be in tip-top shape for the area's demands. Skin tends to get softer for sandstone, quartzite, and most limestone, and much harder for prickly rocks like granite, volcanic tuff, monzonite, and the syenite porphyry of Hueco Tanks. For the fine-grained sandstone of Fontainebleau or the Southeast, all you gotta do is show up and let nature do the work. Areas like the Buttermilks or Hueco, however, require tactics and cultivation. One easy way to prep for both is to climb in the gym as much as possible. This will build friendly calluses and harden your hands for granite and volcanic tuff. To get your skin soft but tough for sandstone, keep climbing in the gym, but make sure to sand down calluses and hard spots before each session so hands feel smooth and supple.

Skinjuries

When the inevitable happens, be ready with an effective and healing response.

Split tips: Stop the bleeding, and then clean it up well. If it's small, dab on a little liquid bandage, tape it up, and carry on. The bigger the split, the fewer goes you have left, and the more you try, the more you will enlarge it. After the event, have patience: A split can take up to a full week to heal. The weaker, healing tip will be more susceptible to re-injury on the same type of holds that gave you the injury in the first place. Work on friction slabs or mantels. You've probably been meaning to anyway.

Worn-down tips: After a couple of days you'll find your tips going all pink and shiny, eventually weeping a clear fluid like morning dew. This phenomenon is common at sandstone areas like Joe's Valley and Fontainebleau, and the only way to halt this erosion is to stop climbing long enough for your skin to recover and grow back. Luckily, your skin grows fast, so even a single rest day or a morning of rest after a night of solid skin care can be enough. The longer you let it go, the longer it takes to come back. If you absolutely must carry on, consider taping with friction tape (see Skin Kit on next page). Mind how your finger joints feel, too; most folks will over-grip when climbing with tips taped.

Flappers: Stop the blood, clean it up, and proceed into surgery. You can tape it back down and carry on, but this depends on your situation. If you have time, chill out and do proper care and maintenance. If tomorrow is the last day of your road trip, Frankenweld that thing together and go till your finger falls off! However, don't bleed all over the rock, for the sake of other climbers. If you elect to do surgery, carefully trim the flap away and clean again (this will hurt). Apply an antibiotic ointment, a Band-Aid, and, if you're still climbing, a protective layer of climbing tape. That digit will be sensitive, so make good decisions.

QUICK TIPS

Antihydral is a popular but extreme drying agent that can be applied at night for dry hands during the day. It affects people differently, but it's excellent for folks with chronically damp hands. It can be fickle, so start out slowly: Put a light coating on the tips for a few hours, over a couple of days, and you should see results.

Liquid chalk is another option that can be applied liberally before chalking up with loose chalk; it lays down a sort of foundation to keep your hands drier longer. However, it's just alcohol and chalk, so you can make your own.

No matter your skin type, it's always advisable to moisturize after a day of climbing. Salves like Climb On, Joshua Tree, and Giddy are excellent options, packed with herbs and soothing oils. Put it on (extra on damaged areas) before bed to get maximum results while you sleep. Never apply this stuff right before climbing! Pure vitamin E is similar. Buy a gel cap, poke a tiny hole in it, and distribute among your fingers.

Keep a clean, healthy diet. You are what you eat, so avoid greasy foods like bacon and donuts. Consider adding fish oil, which helps maintain healthy skin thanks to omega-3 fatty acids (DHA and EPA) that regulate oil production and have anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties.

Drink water! Pinch the back of your middle knuckle. If a little ridge of skin stands up, you're on your way to being dehydrated. Hydrated, pliant skin is more resilient to tears, especially in dry environments, so do your whole body a favor and drink more water.

REAL WORLD: KEVIN JORGESON

My skin became a hot topic of debate on the Dawn Wall, and the biggest lesson I learned is to start with prevention and then deal with maintenance of injuries when they come. I split two fingers on day two. Australian Elastoplast Sports Tape, with its fabric-like texture, saved me. I experimented with different taping techniques and finally settled on one that worked, including using superglue. Then it would last maybe 12 minutes for a redpoint burn, and I'd have to rip it off and do it all over again. For me, it's about making the MOST out of every attempt. You have to be patient. If that means waiting for three days until that magic hour of shade and wind—do it. That's what I had to do to send pitch 15. I could have made attempts earlier, but I knew that I only had one to three goes before I would start bleeding again, so I had to make it count. Know the limits of your skin. Don't be a jack-rabbit and make attempt after attempt.



For more info on Kevin's skin battle, check out our complete Dawn Wall coverage: climbing.com/dawn-wall-interviews.

SKIN KIT / REFER TO IMAGE ON P.41

Sander

Sanding is all about prevention. A bit of sandpaper or a dedicated sanding block go a long way in trimming down rough spots or snags, which can easily split or become a flapper. The edges of your fingernails can quickly get hard and sore, and when climbing slopers for days, the underside of your nails at the fingertip morph into a glassy plastic that can split painfully. A sanding tool helps to maintain even skin and trim down the ragged edge of a split or flapper-to-be. Options abound—most popular are drywall sanding sponges, manicure files, or just a bit of fine-grit sandpaper. Sand off any rough edges, loose skin, overdeveloped calluses (which can become large and painful), and hardened skin (particularly if you need it soft), but be wary of sanding skin too thin, which can lead to more splits. Err on the conservative side: You can always remove more skin, but you can't grow more skin on demand.

Liquid Bandage

This is an excellent alternative to the old-school method of using superglue to close a tip. A liquid bandage is flexible, waterproof, and often contains an antiseptic, which is convenient if the tip is already an open wound. It's not as resilient as superglue, but it's an amazing substance to brush on your skin in a light coating before applying tape. After wrapping the digit with tape, make sure to add another little dab on top to help hold the tape together. Include superglue in your kit as well, as it can help add a thin, temporary layer to your skin for just one more go. (It's also helpful to have for small shoe-repair issues, like delamination.) Another option is compound tincture of benzoin, which is used both to treat damaged skin and help tape/bandages stick better. It also benefits climbers by toughening the skin it's exposed to. Keep in mind you need compound tincture of benzoin; regular tincture of benzoin does not have these benefits.

Alcohol or Hydrogen Peroxide

Both of these remove the grease from your hands, so a little spray bottle of either is a great addition. Coat your hands and rub them together; you'll notice they dry almost immediately. Apply chalk afterward. Folks with oily skin can use it in intermittent doses throughout the day, but a caveat: Alcohol and hydrogen peroxide both stimulate circulation at the surface of the skin, meaning your hands might feel hot after an application, especially if the weather is warm. Available in several strengths (any are fine, more alcohol content means more drying capabilities); alcohol is more powerful than peroxide. Witch hazel is a good and less harsh alternative because it's a strong astringent that actually narrows blood vessels, thus cooling your hands.

Nail Clippers and Razor Blades

Long nails don't cut it for rock climbing, so trim them regularly with clippers, which are also useful for emergency "surgery," like trimming the loose skin on a flapper. The razor blade is very valuable because you can trim down split tips and flappers to a fine edge, which can speed the healing process in addition to making taping easier. Keep a couple of clean, new (this is very important) blades wrapped up in a safe place in your kit, not running wild in your bag, and throw them away as soon you get any blood on them.

Tape

Apply climber's tape (aka standard white athletic tape) before, during, or after climbing or injury. If you're prone to split tips, consider taping before bearing down on needle-sharp holds. Otherwise tape up as your skin wears down during a session, or after you get a split, in order to keep climbing. There are many options of climber's tape to choose from, but the brand Mueller is a go-to, as it's extremely sticky and durable so you don't have to constantly retape. One secret weapon that's different from climber's tape is friction tape, like 3M or Ace brands that are used on hockey sticks to increase grip. It has rubber in the tape, so it's excellent for covering up worn-out tips because it will increase friction instead of decrease it like climber's tape does. Mueller and the Australian Elastoplast are the best climbing tape brands, so consider investing in several rolls at a time. There are a lot of methods for taping against splits and tears, usually determined on a case-by-case basis. For split tips try concentric X's (see below).



Injury-Free Movement

BY DR. JARED VAGY



PREVENT COMMON INJURIES WITH SIMPLE MOVEMENT AND TECHNIQUE UPGRADES

Climbing is a unique sport in that anyone new to it can just chalk up and do their best, learning and tweaking technique as they go. This is in contrast to any other skilled sport like golf, tennis, or gymnastics, where movement is trained and refined by coaching on a regular basis. Proper movement patterns are essential to success, and climbing without this foundation leaves you susceptible to overuse injuries and may keep you from taking it to the next level. As a climber and doctor of physical therapy, I've learned several rules that every climber should know to climb safely and efficiently, and using this information can help you correct dangerous movement patterns, reduce your risk for injury, and climb even harder.

5 RULES TO PREVENT OVERUSE INJURIES

Each of these guidelines might seem pretty basic, but if you concentrate on doing all of them simultaneously, you'll find that your body climbs more efficiently and smoothly, and you'll get less tired on routes that you might have found challenging in the past. Each muscle, tendon, and bone will move separately but in harmony with the others to achieve a result that's greater than the sum of its parts. At your next gym session, pay attention to all five of these to see which ones you need to focus on and which ones come naturally to you. Try to incorporate the ones you're slacking on without losing the rules you've mastered.

1 Don't Hunch Over

When your body is aligned with good posture, the muscles can act more effectively and are less likely to strain themselves to get the job done. Good climbing posture is similar to seated posture. Keep your trunk upright, shoulders back, and shoulder blades gently squeezed together. This will create a powerful foundation from which to move, and it will greatly reduce the chance of shoulder injury by relying on your back and core instead of your easily tweaked shoulders.

2 Bring Your Hips Into the Wall

Your center of mass is a point around which the weight of your body is concentrated and the force of gravity acts.

That means the closer your center of mass is to your toes, the less gravity acts on your shoulders, elbows, and fingers (hence reducing risk of injury on all of these body parts). The way you move your center of mass closer to your toes (on steep or overhanging rock) is by bringing your entire pelvis toward the wall or by rotating one hip into the wall. You will climb more easily by not fighting gravity as much.

3 Straighten Your Arms

As humans evolved into upright creatures, we began to interact with our environments with straight legs and bent arms. This is why it seems unnatural for climbers to bend their knees and straighten their arms while climbing. However, when you bend your knees and straighten your arms, your weight transitions into your powerful legs, where your body has the most strength. Try and make every move keeping straight arms, meaning you might need to do a few extra foot moves, including getting your feet really high to stand up. This will help reduce the reliance on your biceps and forearms, while decreasing the chances of an elbow injury.

4 Push With Your Legs

The muscles in your legs are the largest in the body; they are developed to support your full body weight, and this is why they are so much bigger than your arms.

When you push with your legs to move your body to the next hold, you are moving more efficiently than pulling with your arms. Always think first about pushing with your legs, and then only pull with your arms if you have to. Concentrating on using your legs will not only increase your endurance, it also will reduce the weight and stress you're putting on your arms and fingers, making them less susceptible to problems.

5 Climb Like You Crawl

Babies learn early on the most efficient ways to maneuver in their environment. They learn how to crawl by moving their right arm first then their left leg, and then their left arm followed by their right leg. Moving with this rhythm is the most efficient way to climb, and it's what your body naturally wants to do. Any time you fight what the human form was designed to do, you open yourself up to a world of bodily problems and complications. Allowing your body to move the way it wants will greatly reduce the chance of injury from head to toe.



DR. JARED VAGY, DPT, IS A CLIMBER AND PROFESSOR AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA. HIS BOOK *THE ULTIMATE CLIMBER: PREVENT INJURY AND PEAK YOUR PERFORMANCE* (THECLIMBINGDOCTOR.COM) TEACHES YOU HOW TO CLIMB STRONGER WITHOUT GETTING HURT.

Change Your Movement

Building off the basic rules, take it one step further to minimize risk of injury.

SHOULDER

The tendons in your shoulder slide through a narrow passageway and attach to the bones of your shoulder (collarbone, shoulder blade, and the smaller acromion). These tendons can become compressed when the space between the bones in this passageway is reduced, which can occur from repetitively moving your shoulder into a stressful position such as a chicken wing, where the elbow elevates above your shoulder. Crack climbing can be especially hard on the shoulders, specifically from the twisting motion of a jam that's done under strain. When this occurs, the bones in your shoulder pinch down on the tendons, which can cause inflammation and pain.



Climbing like you have chicken wings (elbows up and out) can compress the tendons between the shoulder bones.



Straighten your arms and drop your shoulders away from your ears to decrease compression of the shoulder.

FINGERS

The muscles in your forearm extend into long, narrow tendons as they reach into the fingers. These tendons run through sheaths and are anchored by pulleys that keep the tendons gliding flush to the bones. When excessive strain is placed on your finger tendons, the pressure can pull the tendon away from the bone and sprain your pulley.



Closed-hand crimping, characterized by hyperextension of the final joint in the fingers, exerts maximal stress and should be used only when necessary.



Open-hand crimping exerts minimal stress on the joints and tendons and is the best grip position. Some tiny holds will require closing your hand, but practice keeping your hands open whenever possible.

WRIST

Repetitive gripping of climbing holds can compress the joints and muscles in your wrist and lead to pain and injury. Certain holds such as underclings and slopers can position your wrist in even more extreme, awkward flexed positions, leading to further compression.



Flexing the wrist forward each time you grab a climbing hold can place an unhealthy, abnormal pressure on the wrist.



Positioning your wrist as neutrally as possible (straight down below the hold, let gravity do the work!) can help minimize the pressure.

ELBOW

When you climb, you are constantly pulling and working the biceps muscles. These muscles overdevelop, and the opposing triceps become weak, creating an imbalance. When the triceps muscle group is stressed, this imbalance can cause micro-tears and lead to pain while climbing. Typically, when climbers don't properly engage the triceps, the elbow joint is placed in an awkward and sub-optimal position.



Climbing with the elbow outward can strain the triceps muscle in the region of the elbow.



Move the elbow downward and in line with the hand and hold to decrease the strain on the triceps muscle.

Double Figure Eight Knot

BY JULIE ELLISON



LEARN THIS SIMPLE AND VERSATILE KNOT

Also referred to as a “bunny ears” figure eight, this knot is great for building an anchor using two solid pieces of protection and the rope in a streamlined setup. It’s also used to “fix” a rope, which is common for photographers and aid climbers who need to ascend an anchored (“fixed”) line. Each of the ears is a clipping point for the pieces of protection in an anchor, and they can be adjusted separately for an equalized system. Plus, it has a built-in master point for belaying a follower in guide mode.

1

Going from your harness, pull out about five feet of rope and tie a figure eight on a bight, leaving the bight long. (If you’re fixing a rope, just do this at the end of the rope.)



2

Take the bight and run it back through the top strands in the knot, but don’t pull it all the way through. You should have two large loops on top of the knot (the bunny ears) and one on bottom.



3

Now flip the bottom loop back, over the tops of the two ears, and then down in front, so it’s near the bottom of the knot.



4

Pull the ears (one more than the other to get a longer ear) to tighten the bottom loop up to the base of the knot.



5

Clip each bunny ear to a piece of gear and put a carabiner through both bunny ears for a master point—you’re good to go!



Skoop Get Your Super On



Photo by Jess Gilbert

This is Delaney Miller. Delaney is a total badass. She's so cool that sometimes we find ourselves lying awake at night, wondering to ourselves, "why can't we be more like Delaney?" While we may never have her superhuman climbing skills, at least we can help her get her super on with our powdered superfood blends.

Whether your diet is a perfectly balanced symphony of macronutrients or a cacophony of pizza and beer, everyone can benefit from a turbo-charged boost of phytonutrients and adaptogenic herbs. We even have plant-based protein to turn you into a lean, mean, 5.14-crushing machine. Basically, Popeye is to spinach as Delaney is to Scoop.

Intrigued? Go to healthyskoop.com and get yourself a super sample box for just ten bucks. Or go all in with a big bag and take **25% off with code CLIMB25**. And if you're ever in the Boulder area, stop by the Scoop intergalactic headquarters and meet our team—8 humans, 3 dogs and counting.



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It's always hard to leave paradise. Picking up camp on a sunny morning in Coyote Gulch, Grand Staircase - Escalante National Monument, UT - Andrew Burr

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Photo: Bob Lockhart

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- D-5: Central Rock Gym - Watertown, MA

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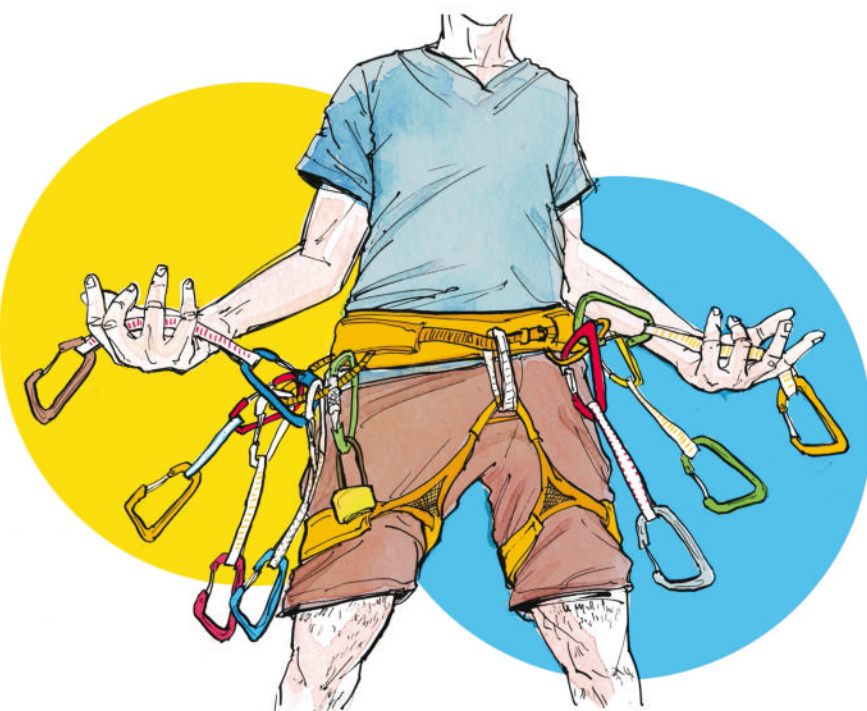


Climbing skraitch



Ask Answer Man

HE KNOWS CLIMBING. AND HE KNOWS IT.



When clipping gear to your harness, such as quickdraws and cams, do you have the gate facing away from your body or toward it?

—Cash Upton, Santa Barbara, CA

How dare you. This very question was not only the impetus of the Cuban Missile Crisis but also that of Answer Man and Mrs. Answer Man's divorce (we're friends again, with benefits). If any readers are unfamiliar with the nature of this debate, Hollywood made a movie about it called *Braveheart*. The characters disagreed about some other stuff, too, but Netflix it and you'll get the gist.

But I'm here to tell you that, like most things in life (e.g., ice cream flavors), there is a correct answer, a best choice, and Answer Man will deliver it posthaste.

If you rack your draws with the gate facing away from your body, the extra wrist twisting and following pre-clipping biner adjustment causes a muscle to unnecessarily fire, thus further—and with great speed—pumping your baby forearms into failure. Therefore, you must rack your draws with the gates facing inside.

Amen. Let it forever be exalted as gospel. Let the people rejoice at this decree.

It should be noted, however, that when you're cleaning a route, it is considerably more convenient to hang the draw back on your harness in the reverse configuration. Go figure.

Last winter, my partner and I were the first to climb a rare ice line on Indian Head in the Catskills, but we did it on top rope. Is it still a first ascent? —Skip Thompson, via email

Are you writing a book called *Skip Thompson's Minor Choss Routes and Other Self-Agrandizing Achievements*?

Ah, who cares. The answer to your question is no. But also yes. People bolder than you will say not really since TRing isn't exactly the pinnacle of style. And we all know that style counts. Others, though, including myself, might say that if it has not been done in better style, your send counts as an FA. I say mark it, dude.

My partner yelled at me in the gym for "spiking" her after she fell. I apologized, but I have no idea what spiking is, how I did it, or how to stop doing it. Please advise.

—Penny N., Portland, OR

Geez, yelled at you? In the gym? First order of business: Find a new partner whose general disposition isn't on the fast track to a domestic dispute. Second: Find a way to curb your abhorrent belay technique so your new partner's ankles don't one day resemble the shattered dreams of your disappointed parents.

Spiking is the silent fear pervading every quaking bone of a lead climber lacking confidence in his or her belayer. This occurs when an unsuspecting (read: shitty, inattentive, useless, unsafe) belayer sits back in their harness and offers no give when the climber hits the end of the rope after a fall. The ensuing pendulum smacks the climber at full speed into the wall with whatever body part happens to be facing forward at the moment. You caused this.

You can fix it by offering just one tiny hop at the end of the fall. Belaying is a bit of an art and a real skill to master. Find an overhanging route and have your climber lead up to a bolt high on the wall and take. Now, give a little jump. Your climber's weight should gently lift you off the ground a few feet. Next, ask your climber to take a controlled fall with the bolt at his or her knees, feet, then above the bolt completely. Work on your timing and how much slack is in the rope. Mind the ground and try to get better. It's the only way anyone will trust you, ankle breaker.

✉ ANSWERMEN@CLIMBING.COM

AND OTHER TOPICS

What does the word "futuristic" mean in terms of boulder problems? It means they haven't f'n done it yet (and that most of us never will).
What was your most memorable climb? The one out of your mom's bed. **Are bigger crashpads better?** Oh, sure...but yours is great!

What's Next for the Dawn Wall?

BY CEDAR WRIGHT



THE DAWN WALL was pretty cool, I guess, but it could have been radder.

If your response to this expertly crafted sentence is “What’s the Dawn Wall?” my reply is “Give this magazine back to its rightful owner. You are not a climber, if you are even a human.”

If you love rock climbing or just have a pulse, the Dawn Wall was impossible to miss. It was the highest profile climb I’ve ever witnessed in my 25+ years of Yosemite climbing, and, dare I say, it was the weirdest climb ever, too!

Perhaps there is some sort of karmic media energy attached to the Wall of Early Morning Light on El Capitan, because the last time there was even close to this much hype surrounding an El Cap ascent was when Warren “I’m insane” Harding and Dean “me too” Caldwell scratched over the top on the first ascent of this same wall after an epic, wine-fueled aid climb.

This time, thanks to social media and smartphones, Tommy and Kevin brought us 5.14d big wall selfies, daily finger-skin progress photos, and professional quality imagery of delicious-looking, gourmet bagel sandwiches. These guys were eating better than I was in the comfortable confines of my condo in Boulder, Colorado, thanks to a dedicated team of “dirtbag sherpas” who ascended the lines daily to replenish the climbers with fresh lobster tails, caviar, chocolate-dipped strawberries, and bottles of Cristal.



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HD. We’re talking perfectly lit cinematography that’ll make *Avatar* look like *The Andy Griffith Show* and *The Amazing Spider-Man* look like he was climbing 5.4. At times there was a small city living up there, complete with accompanying traffic jams and light pollution. Tommy and Kevin even took advantage of the camera operator’s lights to illuminate the gnar they set out to redpoint each evening.

To make matters even more odd, they climbed in the middle of winter. The send of the century owes a debt of gratitude to fossil fuels, CO₂, coal-burning power plants, and my old Corolla, because thanks to global warming, Kevin and Tommy enjoyed three weeks of nearly perfect climbing weather in January. They dodged an ice bomb here and there, but one of the top threats to their success was that it was too hot to climb during the day! They waited until nightfall to climb, a lesser-known benefit of which was that it gave their stylists plenty of daylight to get their wardrobe and hair just so.

And the whole epic ordeal unfolded in real time thanks to NBC’s live feed! Two weeks in, some cynics were calling it the “Yawn Wall” because watching these guys pushing the outer limits of big wall climbing was slower than watching paint dry. I myself was on the edge of my seat. Because I have free climbed El Cap, I know that it really isn’t over till it’s over on that big ocean of stone. For this reason, the Dawn Wall started to really stress me out. For God’s sake just send this thing already so I can go back to my life! And then, finally, thanks to tenacity, titanium tendons, a dedication to training, and the winter sun, the Dawn Wall went free! When have you ever witnessed something like that live on your laptop?

When Tommy and Kevin weren’t eating like kings or wrestling technical, dime-size, fingernail crimpers and microscopic foot nubbins, the weather-worn duo could be found napping, watching Netflix, and answering bad questions from uninformed reporters by phone. Mainstream media, which operates with the collective intellect of a five-year-old child with a head injury, had decided that this climb was a big deal, but had no real idea why. In their desperate struggle to understand what the heck was going on up there on that blank, unforgiving wall of stone and why it was so important, they came up with the comical but essentially accurate fact that they were climbing the face using “only their hands and their feet.” I’d like to point out that they also used their elbows and knees, among other things!

To add to the world-class mass-media circus, the entire climb was documented by Big UP Productions, who had a team of cinematographers living on the wall with the climbers, documenting every high-step, gaston, and trip to the poop tube. The film crew weaved a wild spiderweb of up-ropes, side-ropes, down-ropes, and middle-frontside-kickflip ropes in order to shoot every gritty moment in mind-blowing

By the time they stumbled to the top, Tommy and Kevin were gods among men, and the media machine only gained steam. The climb was heralded as the hardest big wall free climb in the world, galaxy, and universe. I was so inspired I wanted to chop off my finger so I could be more like Tommy, who apparently shouted too much encouragement as Kevin tried like 579 times to redpoint pitch 15. He appeared on *SportsCenter* and *Today* and wasn't even able to speak! His labored efforts to answer reporters' questions sounded like Gollum with strep throat.

Where could climbing's hardest and weirdest feat go from here but to the plush couches of *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*? "Everything about what you were doing was dangerous," Ellen declared, after Tommy tried to explain that free climbing El Cap is actually relatively safe. She delved into the finer aspects of cutting off a finger with a table saw, and then sent them on their merry way with five-year subscriptions to Netflix and a bottle of whiskey, which if you guys aren't planning to use one or the other, might as well drop them by the *Climbing* magazine office.

But my lame jokes aside, the Dawn Wall has forever changed the lives of not just Kevin and Tommy, but really all climbers. In many ways this is an infinitely wonderful and positive occurrence. Climbing has gotten some of the recognition it deserves as one of the most athletic and demanding sports in the world. The general public is maybe 10% less clueless about what it means to climb a rock. Some people may even now know the difference between free soloing, free climbing, and summiting Everest!

And, for once, whether or not the media had any clue why it was so hyped, the spotlight was legitimately well-placed. This is truly a new level in difficulty on El Cap. But to be fair, it was actually a step back in style, compared to other El Cap free climbs. Many of Tommy's other difficult El Cap ascents were done in true "capsule style," with no one bringing them food, no pink-pointing, and in several cases, such as *Magic Mushroom* and the *Nose*, Tommy went back to free climb these routes in a day, arguably the final step in perfect style, save perhaps a free solo or the coveted onsight, naked, barefoot, chalkless free solo.

That's the great thing about climbing, it's as much art as sport. There are no absolute rules save the ones we arbitrarily define, and so much about climbing is not about "winning," but about style. I bring up the fact that there is room for improvement in the style of this remarkable ascent not to be a jerk—believe me, I might as well be the president of Tommy's fan club—but because this throws down the gauntlet for future generations of climbers to improve on the style in which the Dawn Wall was climbed. What an opportunity!

When I asked Tommy what some of his stylistic compromises were in freeing the Dawn Wall, he said, "We fixed ropes, worked



THE CREW CELEBRATES ON THE SUMMIT.

things top-down, put in bolts top-down, used porters, had photographers up there with us, *and* we stashed gear!" That's what I love about Tommy, he's a no-bullshit guy, and the first one to admit areas where there was room for improvement.

At the end of the day climbing is supposed to be fun, and Tommy put it this way: "I viewed the Dawn Wall as a game with rules that we made to format the best possible experience. But, unlike baseball, football, or any organized sport really, big wall free climbing has no rule book or judges, so we get the privilege of endless debate." Having known him for a long time, I'm willing to bet that somewhere in the back of his mind he's entertaining the idea of heading back to the Dawn Wall for a purer ascent, so I asked him what he thought perfect style was. He responded, "Onsight, in a day, two people, both freeing every pitch. No help from anyone—or onsight free solo."

Of course, improving on the style of the Dawn Wall is easier said than done! It could be 20 years before someone even repeats the Dawn Wall, but eventually I believe, or at least hope, that it will be freed onsight, then freed in a day, and then, perhaps a thousand years from now it will be repeated onsight in a day! To me that's the beauty of climbing. There is always progression. I asked Tommy where he thought future generations would take El Cap free climbing, and he said, "I think it will go in a lot of directions. There are so many ways to improve on style. Easier routes will get done faster and onsight. People will climb existing routes ground-up without the use of fixed ropes. El Cap will get free soloed. Harder routes will be found, and people will work the crap out of them the way Kevin and I did."

As weird as the circus around it was, the Dawn Wall is a peek into the increasingly cutting-edge future of big wall climbing. Just as climbers in the 1960s would have found it hard to imagine that El Cap would regularly get free climbed, we can't fathom what incredible feats future climbers will pull off on that wall.

So, does Tommy think that one day someone will walk up to the Dawn Wall with no beta and onsight the route in a day? He summed it up pretty well by saying, "It's hard to imagine that right now, but El Cap has proven time and time again to be bigger than imagination."

In Praise of Guidebooks

BY BRENDAN LEONARD



THESE DAYS, KILLER CLIMBING beta lives right in your pocket. The smartphone has changed how we access information for climbing areas the world over, for the most part in a good way. Hell, I think Mountain Project is the greatest invention since the cam. You can find photos of the route you want to climb, the sometimes-complicated approach beta, updates on whether an ice climb is in or not, and even comments from the dozens of people who have pulled the crux move and think it's sandbagged at 5.10, soft for 5.10, or only 5.10 if you're 5'9" or shorter. But you can't deny the beauty and usefulness of a good guidebook.

I have lost countless hours sitting on the floor at the American Alpine Club Library surrounded by hundreds of guidebooks, unable to focus on whatever I came to the library for in the first place, leafing through pages and pages of routes all over the world. My imagination delighted, I play out fantasies of easy alpine adventures and 5.14d sport challenges where I wouldn't even be able to grab the start holds. Guidebooks unlock areas, but they also inspire adventures. I leave with a mental tick list 100 routes long and vague travel plans for the near future.

I'm in love with guidebooks. You couldn't separate me from my copy of Leigh Ortenburger and Renny Jackson's beta and history masterpiece *A Climber's Guide to the Teton Range*, even though I've only climbed four routes in the Tetons and have no immediate plans to go back this year.



BRENDAN LEONARD IS A CONTRIBUTING EDITOR FOR CLIMBING. HE LIVES IN RELENTLESS PURSUIT OF 5.FUN AND WRITES AT SEMI-RAD.COM.

me if I'd be interested in writing a guidebook, even I was a little shocked that my immediate thought was "Hell no!"

I know that the best of them are a tremendous amount of work, usually done for very little money, and maybe even less gratitude. But, after thinking about it more, I figured that if I could share the pleasure and pain of the process, that is to say work with a cowriter, then maybe I could do it. The publisher was game, so I asked my friend Lee, who has a degree in journalism but has spent the past couple decades as an aircraft mechanic. Lee, needless to say, was excited.

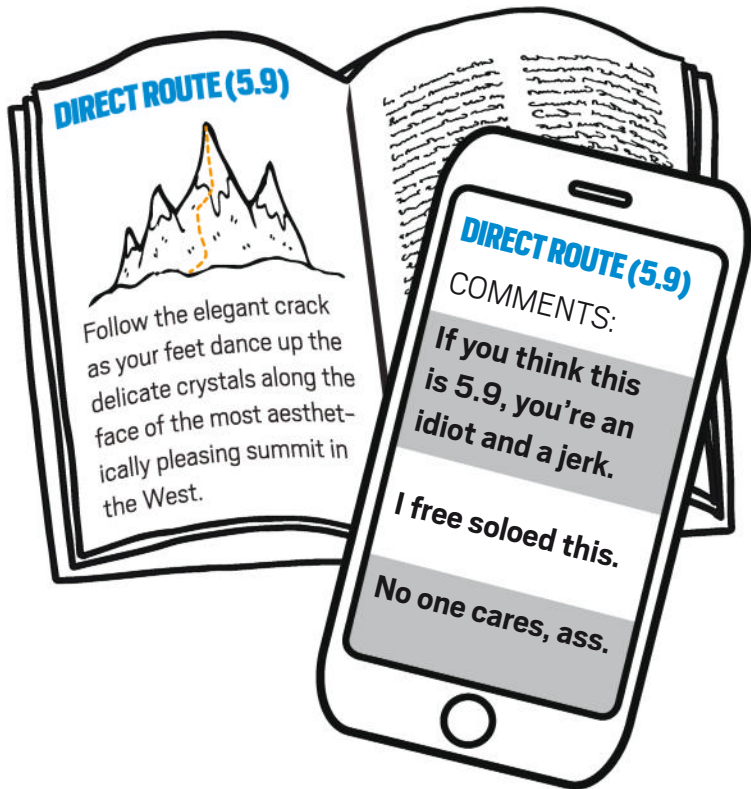
I began jokingly calling the project "Guidebook Light" since it's not an exhaustive tome, more of an intro to multi-pitch trad routes in Colorado's Front Range for climbers who are just getting started placing gear. It covers 40 routes, 5.4 to 5.8+, a far cry from the encyclopedic volumes that line my shelves and have beta on hundreds or thousands of routes. But really it's the only guidebook Lee and I would be qualified to write.

We made a list of climbs spanning the Front Range from Rocky Mountain National Park to Elevenmile Canyon, decided who would write which route descriptions, tried to round up photos from friends and acquaintances. I dragged my girlfriend around Elevenmile Canyon, Eldo, Gar-

I think Steve Levin's *Eldorado Canyon: A Climbing Guide* is the Dawn Wall of guidebooks, with the meticulous curation of beta for every single route in Eldo (even if a route has never seen a second ascent and is a pile of garbage), historical info, and beautiful full-color photos. It retails at \$40, but I think it should go for more like \$75. The Eldo guidebook and *South Platte Climbing: The Northern Volume*, by Jason Haas, Ben Schneider, and Craig Weinhold are almost closer to the artistic level of coffee table books than guidebooks, and really, maybe they are, except a lot of climbers don't own coffee tables.

The Internet is a great place to get a feel for a particular route, but I still haven't found something that gives me the feel of a place like a guidebook does when I crack one open. Crowdsourcing beta is of course wonderful because of the sheer amount of information from a handful or a dozen people, and the ability to constantly update that information. But there's also something more personal about an author's curation of all the routes in one place, or even the 50 best ones, and the labor of love it requires. Guidebooks are an art that I'm very enthusiastic about. So when a publisher asked

Guidebook vs. App



den of the Gods, and Lumpy Ridge, re-climbing routes in order to take one or two photos. For the last route in the book, Lee and I bushwhacked into the base of the Fifth Flatiron last July because I told him it was a fun route for new leaders, which was correct. My memory of not bushwhacking, however, was incorrect. We finished up editing and proofreading over the winter.

In March, I got the first two preview copies of the finished book, my name and Lee's name on the cover under the title, *Classic Front Range Trad Climbs*. Lee and I have been climbing together since 2007, and not only have we managed to not kill each other, we made a book covering some of the terrain we had climbed, just in case anyone wants to have similar "fun."

I never thought I'd write a guidebook, and the thought of people actually buying and using our book is slightly terrifying. We are now, in some respect, responsible for directing the adventures of our readers. Throughout, I tried to remember the book that got me fired up about trad routes in the Front Range—a book called *Serious Play*, by the late Steve Dieckhoff, originally published in 2002. Dieckhoff's hand-drawn topos made the lines of rock formations look soft and inviting, and the language he used was straightforward, no sandbagging, and made you feel like every route was doable, even for a gumby like myself: "This traverse is a bit tricky, so place a solid nut in the crack and then go for it." Every guidebook should read like this, I thought at the time. I hope people will read our guidebook and feel like everything in it is possible out there in my favorite places. That's what a book has the power to do.

WE ARE CORE

Chris Barlow on China Doll, 14a R. P: Adam Sanders

A full-page background image of a rugged mountain range. The peaks are jagged and rocky, with some snow or light-colored rock patches. The lower slopes are covered in dense green coniferous forests. A large, solid dark blue rectangular box is centered over the image, containing white text.

LIGHTER! FASTER! *FARTHER!*

MAKE THIS ALPINE CLIMBING SEASON
YOUR BIGGEST YET BY FOLLOWING THESE
EXPERT TIPS AND ITINERARIES.

BY SHANNON DAVIS AND JULIE ELLISON





DESTINATION

THE SIERRA

ROUTE

THUNDERBOLT to SILL TRAVERSE SIERRA NEVADA MOUNTAINS, CALIFORNIA

Drive down any part of the 300+ miles of Highway 395 between Carson City, Nevada, and Ridgecrest, California, and you'll understand why climbers have called the Sierra Nevada mountains their playground for well over 100 years. Hundreds of pristine peaks form a granite backbone that runs north to south through the central part of the Golden State, including 14,505-foot Mt. Whitney, the Lower 48's highest peak, and three national parks (Yosemite, anyone?). The Thunderbolt to Sill Traverse, sometimes incorrectly called the Palisade Traverse (which is actually much longer and has only been done by a few climbers), is a perfect Sierra outing, with easy to moderate snow travel, tons of third, fourth, and fifth class scrambling, and short bouts of technical climbing up to the 5.8 crux of summiting Thunderbolt Peak. Most climbers do Thunderbolt to Sill, which takes you across five 14,000-foot peaks, in one long day, but the first known ascent party, John Ohrenschall and John Mathias, did it over the course of two days in 1958.

TACTICS

Rack: A typical alpine rack: single set of nuts and small cams, extra biners, and a few slings to replace or strengthen rap anchors. You might want an ice axe and/or crampons for the descent. Wear approach shoes. A 50-meter rope will speed rappels, but a 30-meter rope will suffice. Many climbers only rope up for Thunderbolt's summit

block, so go with a thin, lightweight rope.

Route: Summit Thunderbolt Peak via Southwest Chute (4th class plus the 5.8 summit block). Then tackle a 4th class traverse to a 5.4 summit block for Starlight. Downclimb then rappel to ledges that lead to easy scrambling to the summit of North Palisade. More rappels or downclimbing to 4th class up to the summit of Polemonium. Another

Continued ▶



LONG LAKE ON THE BISHOP PASS TRAIL, WITH PARTS OF THE THUNDERBOLT TO SILL TRAVERSE IN THE BACKGROUND.

PHOTO BY ISTOCK



THE SIERRA

ANOTHER POPULAR LONG CLIMB IN THE SIERRA: MATTHES CREST, 2,500 FEET OF RIDGE TRAVERSING THAT COVERS TWO SUMMITS AND GOES AT 5.7.



GO LIGHTER, MOVE FASTER

From what to pack to how much water to carry to belay transitions, here are 60+ experience-driven tips from veteran alpinists and mountain guides to take your high-country travel to the next level.

BY JULIE ELLISON

ROPE

- Your rope is the heaviest single piece of gear you will bring, so it's also the biggest impact on your movement. Rope management is complicated in the alpine, including the dozens of times you will have to coil, stack, and recoil. Having just the right length will save you time and energy.
- Examine your chosen route to figure out the exact length you need. Most people will default to 60 meters, but in reality, you probably won't need that much. Consider that many routes were

established decades ago when the standard rope was much shorter than 60 meters.

- Alpine terrain is usually more broken, which leads to more ledges and belay stances, meaning pitches can be shorter and more frequent, another reason for a shorter rope.
- If the descent route requires longer rappels, carry a 6mm tag line. Combine it with your rope for a double-line rappel, or fix it to rappel on the rope and use the tag line to retrieve the rope. See climbing.com/choppedroperap for

the correct setup.

- Since you won't be taking huge whippers over and over, choose a rope diameter that's potentially skinnier than what you're used to—8.7 to 9mm is a good range.

RACK

- Don't take sport-specific quick-draws, which serve one purpose and have basically zero versatility. Instead, take alpine draws (single-length sling with two carabiners), which are twice

downclimb to a notch in the ridge. Drop packs here, scramble to the summit of Sill, then head back down to the packs. A 4th class downclimb to L-shaped Couloir then on to Palisade Glacier, through Galey Camp and on to Sam Mack Meadow.

Easier: Do the approach, bivvy on the moraine near Underhill Couloir, do the ridge traverse the next day, camp at Sam Mack Meadow, then do the 8-mile hike out the third day. Palisade Glacier and Palisade Basin offer some camping options, as well as water; back-country permit from Inyo National Forest required.

Harder: Go the opposite way, from Sill to Thunderbolt. Sill's *Swiss Arête* (5.7, 5 to 6 pitches) is a fun route to start on.

Water: A lake just after Bishop Pass is the last place to get water until Sam Mack Meadow.

Crux: The 5.8 grade comes from about 20 feet of bouldery but not

too exposed climbing to get to the true summit of Thunderbolt, which has bolted anchors for easy retreat. Those who are comfortable soloing up to 5.6 will be able to move quickly on this route and might only rope up for a handful of pitches.

Driving: If you're shuttling with two cars, leave one car at Glacier Lodge, about 10.5 miles west of Big Pine, then drive back to South Lake via Bishop. Utilize the bear boxes at the South Lake parking lot. For one car, park at Glacier Lodge and approach Thunderbolt via the North Fork Trail to Sam Mack Meadow (about 8 miles), then summit the peak via the North Couloir (Northeast Buttress in *Climbing California's Fourteeners*, by Stephen Porcella and Cameron Burns).

Alternative: For a longer outing (2 to 3 days), try the Evolution Traverse. It's eight miles of ridge-line across nine peaks and more than 15,000 feet of elevation gain—all after a 10-mile approach.

as versatile. Dyneema slings plus two wire-gate micro-binners barely weigh anything, and this setup has unlimited uses and a variety of configurations.

► Or consider mostly over-the-shoulder slings with a single biner to clip to cams, since each cam has its own biner (these are easier to pass back and forth, too), supplemented with a few alpine draws on your harness for clipping to nuts.

► Carry one double-length Dyneema sling and one piece of closed cord-ette (instead of two pieces of cord).

The sling is easier to put away and half the weight of cord for anchors, but you still have cord to cut and leave for anchors if you have to bail.

► Gain two extra slings by using one to tie your chalkbag around your waist, then use the other as a gear sling for racking. You'll be less likely to run out on wandering alpine pitches, despite a slimmed-down rack.

► Only carry large cams (No. 3 and bigger) if the route specifically requires it. Skew your rack toward .75 and down; alpine rock is more frac-

Continued ►

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DESTINATION

THE ROCKIES

ROUTE

GRAND TRAVERSE OF THE TETONS

GRAND TETON NATIONAL PARK, WYOMING

Go ahead and scratch bagging the Grand off your life list. Passé! Replace it with summiting the Grand *plus* the nine next tallest peaks in the range. On point! The Grand Traverse, covering 13 miles and gaining nearly 13,000 feet, is one of the finest alpine routes in the country, if not the whole damn world. A successful traverse requires fitness, boldness, route-finding skill, marathon-level endurance, and luck. Numerous sections of loose and exposed fifth class must be navigated, and roping up for all of them would be very time consuming. So comfort with exposure and experience moving efficiently in the mountains are a must. It was first climbed south to north in 1963 but is now done north to south to facilitate climbing up the Grand's *North Ridge*, the route's 5.8 crux. Alex Lowe famously ran the route in 1988 in eight hours wearing little more than a T-shirt and shorts (the current speed record, just under seven hours, is held by Rolando Garibotti), but most parties take three days.

Begin by climbing 12,324-foot Teewinot. Some would say this is the physical crux of the traverse as you slog and scramble, gaining nearly 6,000 feet up the East Face. Scramble down a loose couloir on the west side of Teewinot to gain the ridge that connects it with Mount Owen. Negotiate this ridge, passing two major downclimbs along the way (loose 5.6). The most direct line would be to ascend

the 5.6 *East Ridge* of Owen, but this may require crossing a snowfield or two. You could also traverse under the south side of Owen, and then ascend the *Koven Chimney*, on the west side of the summit block (5.4). Either way, descend the *Koven* and rejoin the ridge leading toward the Grand. Most parties will want to hunt for a bivy site here.

Next day, stay on the east side of the ridge until a notch allows passage to the west side. Downclimb here to access a large ledge system. Follow it to the bottom of the Gunsight, a prominent notch between Owen and the Grand. Climb straight out of the Gunsight, via fun 5.6 cracks, then skirt around to the east side to climb to the Grandstand, the flat platform at the base of the *North Ridge*, a 10-pitch 5.8 that is one of the finest routes in the park. If the standard route's chimney pitches are icy (or even if they're not) the Italian Cracks provide a high-quality and somewhat drier variation. Descend the Grand via the *Owen-Spalding* route. Next up is the 5.6 *North Ridge* of 12,804-foot Middle Teton. Route finding can be a bear here, especially in the dark. Descend the SW couloir and find a bivy in the saddle.

For day three, follow the ridge back up to the northwest couloir of South Teton to begin a series of peakbagging along a rocky tightrope. You'll tag South Teton, Ice Cream Cone, Gilkey Tower, Spalding Peak, Cloudveil Dome, and finally 11,901-foot Nez Perce via the West Ridge. Reverse the route to descend, then trot back down the Garnet Canyon trail. You should finish in time for happy hour.

tured so you'll have options to place smaller cams and nuts.

► Carry extra nuts in lieu of a double rack of cams; each unit is lighter and easier to use in a bail anchor.

► Become proficient (read: fast) at placing stoppers—the quicker you are, the more you can use them and the lighter your rack will be.

► If you have to cross a steep snowpatch on the approach, carry one light ice axe and one pair of lightweight crampons, like Kahtoola Microspikes. Have the first person climb up and

then belay the second.

► Take one nut tool for the follower to carry, or leave it at home entirely—you might not want to take the time to retrieve an inexpensive stopper anyway. This might be a controversial call.

CAMPING

► Take full advantage of the bivy pad that's built into your pack, which can be used as a sleeping pad. If it's really cold, spread your rope out underneath the pad for extra insulation.

► For longer trips, try a half-length sleeping pad, full length if bivying on snow. You lose most of your heat by sleeping on a cold surface, and even a really warm sleeping bag will be compressed underneath your body, providing very little insulation.

► Choose a lighter, lower temp-rated sleeping bag and wear all your layers when sleeping for warmth.

► Only consider carrying a tent if you're going more than one night and/or the weather forecast or climate in general is wet. Remember that having

a tent means you can carry a lighter (less insulated) sleeping bag.

► Consider this spectrum of shelter options: A lightweight tent shared between two people. One bivy sack per person. A multi-use tarp can be lighter than a bivy sack. A space blanket is lighter than a tarp.

► If you're more strategic on the big things (rack, camping gear, etc.), you can take luxuries in the small things (food treats, extra socks). Remember, it's not supposed to suck; it's supposed to be fun.

Continued ►

THE VIEW FROM
THE SOUTH RIDGE
OF NEZ PERCE,
THE LAST SUMMIT
OF THE GRAND
TRAVERSE.



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Oh, the places you CAN go!

THE ROCKIES



ONE OF THE AUTHORS GOING FAST AND LIGHT ON A LATE SUMMER SUMMIT OF NEZ PERCE IN THE TETONS.

PACKING

- Organize everything according to how and when you'll use it; having each item in its proper place offers faster access when necessary. Quick snacks, topo, camera need to go in a coat pocket, camping gear at the bottom of a pack, layers on top, etc.
- Don't default to a large backpack, because you will fill it. Instead, try a small pack, knowing you will have to fight to get everything in the pack. Remember that most of your gear (harness, helmet, rack, rope) will be out

and in use most of the time; so choose the pack you'll need for 90% of your journey. Exum guide Zahan Billimoria is able to do two nights on the Grand Traverse with a 25-liter pack.

- Pack beforehand with your partner so you can evenly split items and make sure there's no redundancy; many items are shared: stove, fuel, even toothpaste (of which you only need the tiniest amount!). Lay out all the gear you'll be taking, and at the end, each person should remove one item.

CLOTHING

- Figure out what works for you and take your personal preferences into consideration (Do you run hot? Cold? Sweat a lot?), as well as the area and weather forecast.

- Watch out for packing too many layers, or layers whose duties overlap. A standard alpine outfit should look like this: long-sleeve sun hoody that wicks sweat and insulates like a baselayer while protecting from the sun in hotter temps, a super-light down jacket for insulation, a mini-

malist waterproof shell, and lightweight alpine pants. Carry an extra pair of light, water-resistant pants for a dry forecast, and if there's a possibility of heavy rain, take heavier-duty waterproof pants instead and exchange the lightweight shell for a burlier jacket.

- Make sure at least one of your layers has a hood so you don't have to carry a hat.
- Finding a lightweight, breathable jacket (such as a wind-blocking softshell) that you can leave on all day

Continued ►

TACTICS

Rack: Light alpine rack and skinny 60-meter rope (9.1mm is ideal). Depending on conditions, you may need an ice axe and crampons for navigating snowfields. Wear an approach shoe to climb in, like the Five Ten Guide Tennie, to save weight and time.

Bivy: On a three-day itinerary, plan on camping on the ledges between Owen and the Gunsight, then camping on the saddle between Middle and South Teton on night two. You can't count on water at either site, so fill up at every opportunity (see below). Visit the Jenny Lake ranger station for backcountry camping permits.

Water: Carry one personal Nalgene (or a soft-sided reservoir to save space) and fill from creeks or snowmelt. Refill at Owen and the Lower Saddle, and sometimes in Middle Teton's SW couloir. Harvest snow when you see it.

Cache: If you've got time or a buddy willing to help, stashing a day's worth of food and water at the Lower Saddle between Grand and Middle will help you save weight. Pro tip: Put a couple beers in a stuff sack and shove them under a rock in the creek at the trailhead. They'll be ready when you get back on day three.

Resources: Get more beta at pataclimb.com. *A Climber's Guide to the Teton Range* (mountaineersbooks.org) is an indispensable book of topos and descriptions. Since a major crux is route finding, you'll boost your chances of success by going with an Exum guide. They have been guiding the Grand Traverse for the last 10 years (exumguides.com).

Alternatives: Shorten it by bailing after summiting the Grand (known as the Cathedral Traverse) or by tagging peaks from South Teton to Nez Perce (known as the Cloudveil Traverse). Loving this traverse thing? Add these two routes to your life list: the Cirque Traverse, Wind River Range, Wyoming, and the Mohling Traverse, Indian Peaks Wilderness, Colorado. The former tags nine peaks in the Cirque of the Towers and can include two routes from the Fifty Classic Climbs of North America. The latter is seldom done and links the stunning Lone Eagle Peak and Iroquois; it comes in between 5.2 and 5.7.

Driving: Park at the Lupine Meadows trailhead and find the unmarked climber's trail leading west from the north end of the parking lot toward Teewinot.

Season: Mid-July to mid-September. Target early to mid-August.



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Photo: Rich Crowder



DESTINATION

THE NORTH CASCADES

ROUTE

THE NORTH RIDGE OF MOUNT STUART

ENCHANTMENT LAKES, WASHINGTON

To live in the Pacific Northwest is to have an embarrassment of alpine grandeur within a few hours of your door. This is why the region is a breeding ground for alpinists. Stuart may seem like a dark horse, but the peak couples the alpine rewards of high-profile climbs like Mount Rainier or Liberty Bell with a rare solitude that usually takes a week's walk to achieve.

This 9,415-foot summit rises more than 5,000 feet from the surrounding terrain and is one of the largest chunks of exposed granite in the Lower 48. Its intricate network of ridge lines leading to a distinct summit is truly a sight to behold. The *North Ridge* (5.9), listed in one of the *Fifty Classic Climbs of North America*, may not be a big secret, but its 15 pitches of exposed climbing on solid rock along a knife-edge ridge that goes to the highest point in the Enchantments is one of the few routes included in the tome that is universally lauded as an absolute alpine classic.



TACTICS

Route: From the Longs Pass Trailhead, hike the Longs Pass and Ingalls Lake Trails to Ingalls Lake. Skirt the lake on the west side, and from the north end, drop 300 feet to a meadow and angle toward Stuart Pass. Then, take a climber's trail to a shoulder below Stuart's West Ridge. Contour northwest to Goat Pass. Here, cross the Stuart Glacier, and head up a snow gully to the crest of the *North Ridge* at 8,200 feet. The approach is 13 miles round-trip. Generally, the route sticks to the ridge crest for about 10

Continued ▶

will save time since you won't have to fiddle with your layers, stop, or remove your pack as much.

FOOD/COOKING

▶ A JetBoil or other integrated cooking system packs small, weighs little, and works fast.

▶ Dehydrated meals are easy and fast to cook, require less fuel, eliminate the need for a bowl, and are light and packable. Remove the plastic opening and the silicone packet the night

before you leave to cut down on trash you have to carry.

▶ Don't forget small treats to keep your psych up, like desserts, chocolate, half and half for coffee (fill a tiny pill bottle and freeze it), and dried meats. The name of the game with food is variety, stuff that's good for your body but also appetizing.

▶ Think through the rhythm of the route to know when to eat what. When on the move during aerobic portions (approach), plan on gel packets, energy gummies, and performance

food that you can keep in your pocket and will go down fast. For transitions, pauses, or at the base of a route, try a bar, jerky, or cheese. Then save the more solid food and sandwiches for the summit or just before the descent, when the body can put more energy into digestion.

▶ Wraps are better than sandwiches because tortillas have more moisture than bread and will digest easier. Tuna packets, individually packaged cheese sticks, and dried meats are excellent for the protein your body will start to crave. Find bars that have

real fruit to get a more nutritious, portable snack.

▶ Some options for ultra-light bowls: collapsible cups, cut the bottom off a bladder, reuse old dehydrated meal packaging.

▶ Don't skimp on fuel, especially if melting snow for water, but only pack as much as you need.

EMERGENCY GEAR

▶ Think through everything that could happen and pack for that; a giant first

Continued ▶



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THE NORTH CASCADES



WASHINGTON PASS IS ANOTHER GREAT PLACE FOR FUN, MODERATE, AND LONG ALPINE ROMPS IN THE CASCADES, LIKE THE TUNNEL ROUTE (5.8) ON CONCORD TOWER.

aid kit filled with unnecessary items just takes up space in your pack.

► One of the biggest hazards is your sleeping pad popping, which can ruin your experience pretty fast. Carry a small pad repair kit and make sure you have tape if you shred your jacket or sleeping bag.

► Extra gauze is a must because it's quite light, and if someone has a major bleed, you need extra clothing layers to keep the person warm instead of soaking up blood.

► Remember to split these items with

your partner; you don't both need first aid kits and pad repair materials.

► Never carry a giant multi-tool; only bring along a small knife and the adjustment tools for your specific crampons, stove, etc. Have just the right thing for your particular equipment.

WATER

► This is one of the heaviest items you'll carry, and it should be a main part of your research of the route. Check for snow patches, natural

springs, snowmelt areas, and any lakes where you can refill. There's generally a lot of water available in the mountains, so often you can travel with just one liter, refilling along the way.

► Talk to locals about seasonal conditions and where to stop and refill.

► As soon as you get to camp, drink your water and fill all your water-carrying devices so you don't have to keep relocating to get more.

► An alpine straw, which is a short piece of hose or tube or even just a plastic straw, can help you gather

water from a small spring or snowmelt trickle, and it can be used to gather water from small rock crevices where dipping a large bottle is impossible.

► Leave some water in the bottom of your bottle when putting snow in to melt it; this will help melt snow faster while on the go.

► Go with chemical purification tablets (Aquamira, iodine, etc.) over a much heavier filter.

► Hydration tablets like Nuun can be an efficient way to stay hydrated, prevent muscles from cramping, and

pitches of 4th and 5th class climbing (up to 5.7). Decision time comes at the Great Gendarme, where you can battle up a short 5.9 offwidth or bypass it with a rappel to some easier slab climbing. Descend the Cascadian Couloir.

Rack: One set of nuts, a full set of cams (including one 3.5" piece for the off-width), about 10 slings/draws, extra runners, and cordelette. An ice axe and crampons may be necessary for the glacier crossing and descent.

Bivy: Plan at least two days for the approach, climb, and descent. There are myriad bivy options. Ingalls Lake is solid, but you'll have to backtrack to retrieve camping gear (or climb with it). Or make a camp along Ingalls Creek and choose to hike farther in the morning to reach the *North Ridge*.

Driving: From Seattle, take I-90 82 miles east to WA 970 in Cle Elum. Then go 9.3 miles to a left onto Teanaway Road.

Go nine miles to a Y intersection. Veer right onto FR 9737 and follow it until it ends at the Longs Pass Trailhead.

Resources: Get more beta at *mountainproject.com*; *Selected Climbs in the Cascades, Volume 1*, by Jim Nelson and Peter Potterfield; USGS quad Mount Stuart.

Season: Late summer and early fall are the best times to find dry rock on most of the route.

Alternatives: Yearning to go big, like really big? Look into the Southern Pickets Traverse (VI 5.10+). You'll tag 14 summits along a precarious Ginsu-sharp ridge with glaciers on either side. The rare successful party usually takes up to five days. Or try a done in a (long) day traverse like the Liberty Traverse (V 5.8 to 5.11a). There are many ways to patch the traverse together, but stringing together each summit of the Liberty group over 20 pitches is a feather in any alpinist's cap.

FRIENDLY FOOT

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keep you moving.

- ▶ Adding extra water to dehydrated meals can help keep you hydrated while eating, but don't add so much that your cooking times greatly increase.
- ▶ Every climb is unique, but as a baseline, plan for each climber carrying one water bottle to drink from and a large reservoir system, something like a thermally insulated bottle and a hydration bladder with a delivery tube for on-the-go hydrating, or a "soft" water bottle (one that resembles a plastic

bag) and a four-liter reservoir.

BELAY TRANSITIONS

- ▶ Anchors don't necessarily need to be the standard three pieces of gear; two solid pieces on steeper terrain or one piece and a seated hip belay for low-angle terrain often will suffice.
- ▶ Every anchor should be built as fast as possible, and one thing guides do is simply place two cams close enough that the slings on each cam can be clipped with a single locking

Continued ▶



In the eastern half of the United States, you either explore the backcountry as a climber or a hiker, rarely both. Given the vertically challenged terrain, alpinism takes some imagination. One of the best places to put your creativity to the test is in the 'Dacks, where you can link "slides" and high peaks and save weight by camping in a lean-to.

Beneath the thin carpet of trees is a dome-land, almost like Tuolumne Meadows in California. On just about every peak you'll see a white or gray stripe of bare rock, the classic Adirondack slide. These form on steep slopes after epic rainfalls. Swoosh go the trees and thin layer of duff, leaving clean white lines begging to be climbed. Some are walk-ups. Some are you-fall-you-die.

Venture into the Adirondack High Peaks region, and you can patch together a very alpine adventure by enchainning the Trap Dike on Mount Colden (a 2,000-foot climb from a stunning lake between two cliffs), the state's highest peak Mount Marcy, and the north face of Gothics, the most imposing rock face in the region. Bonus points for doing them in winter.



A BIG STORM CAN WIPE THE SIDES OF GOTHICS AND OTHER ADIRONDACK PEAKS CLEAN, LEAVING BIG SWATHS OF LOW-ANGLE ROCK TO CLIMB.

DESTINATION

THE NORTHEAST

ROUTE

COLDEN-MARCY-GOTHICS LINKUP

ADIRONDACK PARK, NEW YORK

TACTICS

Route: Start at the Adirondack Loj and hike five miles to Avalanche Lake. Skirt along the left bank to reach a series of blocky steps leading to the dike (the obvious

Continued ▶

biner, which becomes the master point, and everything else can be clipped to that carabiner. It's very important to choose solid rock—not choss—with this situation. Of course, this is not as good as three cams spread out, but it's faster and appropriate for alpine.

▶ Use an auto-blocking belay device any time you build a proper anchor (i.e., not a hip belay). This means you can eat, drink, and take care of yourself while belaying.

▶ When using an auto-block system

on the anchor, simply tie a knot (overhand or figure eight on a bight) on the brake strand of the rope once the follower reaches the belay. This saves time normally wasted by tying your partner to the anchor. The leader should grab the belay device clipped to the follower's harness and get going.

▶ Stop when you get a good stance. Stretching the rope often leads to being stuck in a crappy place, which slows everything down and makes it uncomfortable.

▶ Don't bring a personal anchor tether or a daisy chain; just clove in with the rope.

MOVEMENT

▶ Lead in blocks, so each person leads a few pitches at a time. This keeps the leader in the right frame of mind, neither person sits as long, thus not getting as cold, and it keeps the rack organized for the leader.

▶ The hard pitches will always be slow, so focus on moving as fast as

possible on the easier stuff without exhausting yourself.

▶ Even the lightest gear on the market can't substitute for being as physically fit as possible. While super-light biners, a skinny rope, and an ultra-thin jacket do matter, this reliance on ultra-light gear can cause you to focus on the wrong thing. What helps more than anything is to have excellent cardio fitness and being able to free climb fast and safely up to 5.10. See our alpine training program at climbing.com/skill/50-classics-training.

deep gash). The route climbs over easy 3rd and 4th class rock. The crux is a 30-foot rock staircase next to a waterfall; you could protect it, but this is easy soloing territory for those comfortable with it. As you get higher, the walls shrink until it's possible to climb out onto the Colden Slide, but don't exit prematurely, or you'll be on steep, technical terrain with no gear. Stay in the dike until the 2nd or 3rd possible exit, then follow the slide to the top. The Trap Dike's first ascensionists (1850) downclimbed the dike, killed and dressed a deer, and drank brandy from a bottle they nick-named "the admiral," but your day is just getting started. Descend the trail to Lake Arnold, then climb to the top of 5,433-foot Mount Marcy. Then pick your poison: run the Range Trail in cruel ups and downs over Basin and Saddleback Mountains. Or descend steeply toward Slant Rock and Johns Brook Lodge. If you stay on the ridge (the more aesthetic option), angle down to the stream

bed that drains the north face, to reach Gothics. The best (cleanest) route is *New Finger* (5.1). Midway up is the state's best friction pitch. The belayer has no anchor except to park himself in a deep crack, sort of a rock crevasse, and let the leader sweat it out. From the top it's six miles back to the Loj.

Rack: Experienced and confident climbers in dry conditions could send in approach shoes, but consider a light rack and skinny 50-meter rope.

Bivy: You'll cover 25 miles, with approximately 7,000 feet of climbing. Break it up by camping at the Feldspar lean-to.

Driving: From Lake Placid, take NY 73E 2.7 miles south to Adirondack Loj Road. Turn right and continue to the Loj.

Resources: *Adirondack Rock*, by Jim Lawyer and Jeremy Haas (adiron-dackrock.com); Trails Illustrated Lake Placid/High Peaks Map #742 (adk.org).

► The best way to move fast is by keeping steady progress and momentum at the top of your mind, and to always be doing something. Eat/drink on the move, change clothes while belaying, melt water while resting, etc.

RAPPELS

► When rappelling in high winds, lower the first person to the next anchor and then the second should rappel, or coil the ropes and rap with saddlebags to avoid getting them stuck—no need to throw ropes.

► Avoid long rappels, which will get the rope stuck much easier. The blocky nature of alpine terrain should create plenty of ledges to allow for shorter rappels.

► If bailing and leaving gear, consider using the pick of an ice tool to really set the nut.

Special thanks to our Alpine Advisory Board: Jean Belanger, Scott Bennett, Zahan Billimoria, Shannon Davis, Julie Ellison, Cory Fleagle, Blake Herrington, Cheyne Lempe, Dougald MacDonald, and Jason D. Martin.



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MARK JENKINS CLIMBED THE SOUTH PROW OF THE MERLON (SHADOWED), A SATELLITE SUMMIT OF CLOUD PEAK, IN 2008. NOW WE WERE BACK FOR MORE, TARGETING THE FACE AND SOUTHEAST ARRÊTE OF CLOUD PEAK (SUNLIT).


CLOUD NINE

ONE CLIMBER SEARCHES WORLDWIDE FOR MAJOR ADVENTURES; THE OTHER SCOURS THE MOUNTAINS NEAR HOME FOR FIRST ASCENTS. THEY FIND BOTH IN WYOMING'S CLOUD PEAK WILDERNESS. BY DOUGALD MACDONALD

It's my lead. I look glumly at our largest cam—it's obviously not big enough to protect the offwidth above us. We're four pitches up a new route on the east face of Bomber Mountain, a 12,841-foot peak in the secluded Bighorn Mountains of northern Wyoming. It's our fourth big route in five days—the most successful alpine rock climbing trip I've had in years—but the accumulated uncertainties of wilderness climbing are catching up with me. On my last lead I concocted an excuse to belay after less than 60 feet. In places the rock on this face is so loose it's like unexploded ordinance, waiting to detonate at the slightest touch. We are hours from our high camp,

more than 10 miles from the nearest road. It's late afternoon, and I'm nearly out of water. I climb a few feet up the offwidth and then slither back down and hand the rack to my partner.

Mark Jenkins, a local boy raised in Wyoming, is a *National Geographic* staff writer, author of four books of near-death adventures, erstwhile resident of detention cells in China, Algeria, Russia, and the Congo, and a first ascensionist in Canada, Tibet, and Uganda. He grew up in wind-chapped Laramie, worked as a ranch hand and—after lying about his age—on a railroad gang, then lit out for Europe and Africa at age 18. In a sense he never really returned—he has done more than 50 expeditions over the past three and a half decades. Nearly every summer he heads into the mountains of Wyoming as a sort of vacation from his more difficult and dangerous adventures. “A place like the Bighorns is perfect,” he says. “It's hard and a little serious, but it's just a week, and you can plan it practically overnight. No air travel, no hassles. Just pack your stuff and go.”



For me, a week in the Bighorns is a major expedition. I haven't climbed for a full week in remote backcountry since attempting Denali in the 1990s. Between work and other obligations, I snatch long weekends in the hills closer to home. On longer trips, my wife and I sleep in a van, huts, or hotels. I had to ask Mark what food to buy for a week of wilderness camping. But even though we'd never done a long trip together, Mark knew I loved attempting new routes in the Rocky Mountains, near my Colorado home. And the Bighorns are stacked with potential.

Although the range holds two summits over 13,000 feet—including Cloud Peak, the 15th most prominent peak in the Lower 48—and walls of solid granite up to 1,250 feet high, the Bighorns are way off most climbers' radar. People line up for popular routes in the Wind Rivers and Tetons, but the best Bighorn climbs go years without a single ascent. Approach hikes starting at about 10 miles limit the appeal, as does lack of information. The last climbing guidebook was published in 1977.

Mark had done the long approach to Cloud Peak a couple of times already, and now he had a better idea for two guys in their mid-50s with battered knees but also bank accounts: We've arranged for horses to carry our heavy loads high into the Cloud Peak Wilderness. This lets us tuck a few extras into the packs, including a plastic bottle of single malt and two separate tents so a pair of middle-aged men can spend their restless nights apart. We meet the horse trailer at the West Tensleep trailhead in the middle of August. The wranglers wear checked shirts, wide-brimmed hats, and chaps; one of them carries a six-shooter to scare off bears. They roll our packs in canvas tarps and lash the 50-pound burritos on either flank of a mule. Mark and I pick up daypacks and stroll into the woods after the team as a steady rain begins to fall.

The trees thin and then vanish above Mistymoon Lake, and the wranglers are shivering in their jeans in an icy rain when we catch the horses 6.5 miles in. Mark and I strap the daypacks to our groaning, overladen packs, hike down to Paint Rock Creek—Mark, the Wyoming native, calls it a “crick”—and bushwhack another three miles to a campsite at the head of the drainage at 11,000 feet.

In the morning clouds still threaten, but two hours later the sun is burning them off, and we decide to check out a big rock buttress we'd passed on the way in. Soon we're laybacking and jamming up steep corners of golden granite. Reflections of white, puffy clouds slide across the unnamed lake below, a dead ringer for a drifting jellyfish. Despite the sun, an icy wind knifes through our clothes. Leading the fourth pitch, Mark stalls out and belays to one side

of the main corner. He says he didn't like the feel of a thin, hollow flake below the obvious crux, and then adds, “You should take a look.” I traverse back to the corner, reach high to place a couple of tiny nuts, and shakily pull past the flake and through the bulge above. I belay at a stance a few moves higher, breathing hard.





“Brass Balls MacDonald!” Mark crows as he slaps the jug above the crux bulge.

“Don't expect *that* to happen very often,” I tell Mark as he racks for the next pitch. “That's probably the last time you'll see me take over a lead.”

Mark laughs, but I'm not joking. The testy lead has added a big deposit to my Fear Reservoir. My oldest climbing partner, Dave Goldstein, came up with the Fear Reservoir as a metaphor for the ebb and flow of personal psych. Dave's idea was that every climber has a mental holding tank for the anxieties of climbing, a form of psychological flood control. Each time you push through a sketchy crux or pull off a loose block or dodge a storm, more fear flows into the holding tank. Eventually the reservoir fills, and then you have to back down to easier, safer climbs until the accumulated anxiety drains away. If the tank overflows, you may not be capable of climbing at all. You could keep the reservoir empty by never pushing your limits, but such a drought would parch the souls of most climbers. Somewhere in each climber's Fear Reservoir is a level where dread and relief slosh around in perfect balance.

We hike in the dark early next morning to the 11,750-foot saddle above our camp, dividing the south side of Cloud Peak from Bomber Mountain. Near the top we find a twisted shard of aluminum, a relic of the B-17 Flying Fortress warplane that crashed into these mountains in June 1943, killing all 10 men aboard. To the east is the Merlon, a 1,250-foot battlement of solid granite. In 2008, Mark and Ken Duncan climbed a 12-pitch, mostly new 5.11 up the nose of the wall, running out of daylight on top and sitting out the night with only light shells for protection. “Coldest night of my life,” Mark said. But he hadn't been too cold to notice other good lines nearby.

We slide down a snowfield to a shallow tarn, fill our water bottles, and then head for the long arête to the left of the Merlon. Mark starts soloing at the extreme toe of the formation, aiming to maximize the route, while I hike up talus alongside. We regroup on a ledge a few hundred feet higher and rope up. After a false start up a steep corner, the route flows up the narrowing arête until we are high over unclimbed walls on either side. It's never harder than about 5.8 and nearly always enjoyable—we top out by noon and hike to the summit of Cloud Peak, where hikers



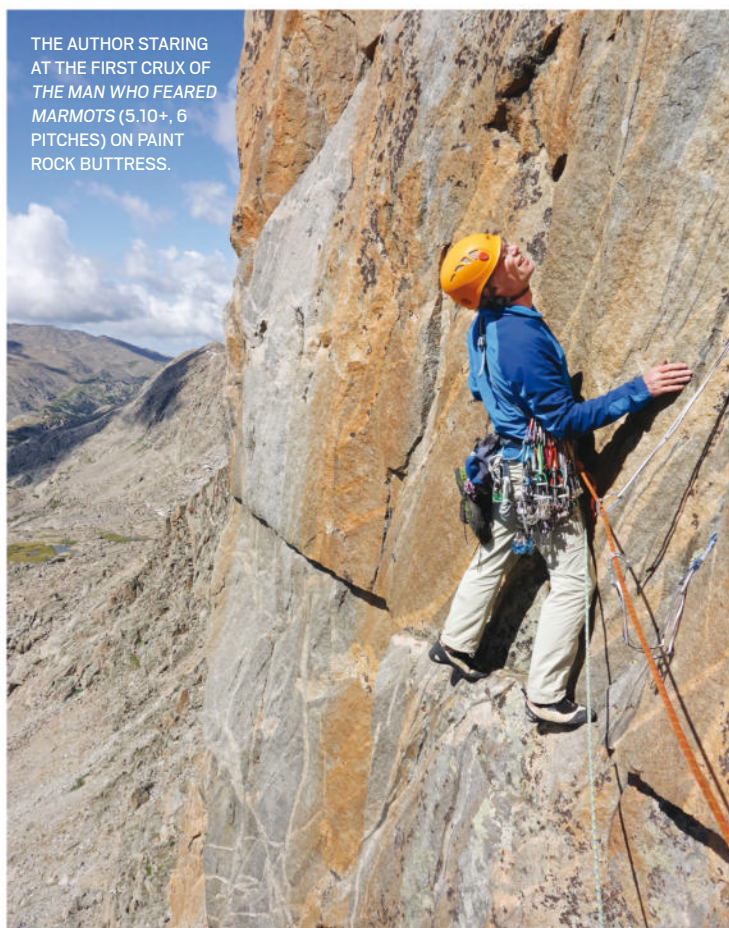
THE FEAR RESERVOIR IS A METAPHOR FOR THE EBB AND FLOW OF PERSONAL PSYCH, WHERE DREAD AND RELIEF SLOSH AROUND IN PERFECT BALANCE.



MARK JENKINS STARTS UP THE PAINT ROCK VALLEY IN THE RAIN, SOON TO LEAVE ANY SEMBLANCE OF A TRAIL.



WRANGLERS LOAD UP THE MULE WITH SUPPLIES FOR A WEEK IN THE BACKCOUNTRY.




THE AUTHOR STARING AT THE FIRST CRUX OF THE MAN WHO FEARED MARMOTS (5.10+, 6 PITCHES) ON PAINT ROCK BUTTRESS.

are posing for photos in the sun.

The hiking route up Cloud Peak follows the ridge directly above our basecamp and is popular, despite a 12-mile trek. Yet few people leave the main route—we see no one during our six nights in the Paint Rock valley but spot plenty of signs of wildlife. Bobcat tracks cross the snow at over 12,000 feet, and pine martens appear twice in the talus. Below Cloud Peak to the east is a half-mile-wide glacier—the largest in the range—and 1,000-foot walls with only one known rock climb.

On the way down we stop to scope the south face of Cloud, the wall left of our ascent route. A rust-colored pillar suggests a line, so we cache our gear at the saddle and plan to return early the next morning. There's a lot of "fake it till you make it" in alpine climbing—just getting started is often the hardest part. With our gear at the top of the pass, we'll have to go at least that far. Returning to camp, we hop easily across Paint Rock Creek, which has dropped dramatically in the two days since the rain stopped. Now the weather is fine and we've already climbed two good routes. Like the creek and the waters of Jellyfish Lake, my Fear Reservoir is drawing down.

That night in the tent, however, I lie awake thinking of loose flakes peeling off above me, yanked by the rope or toppled by an errant toe. I imagine a sliding slab of talus crushing my leg. I think, *I'm wearing long underwear and both of my shells on these climbs, and I'm still cold. What happens if we have to bivvy?* Raindrops spatter the tent. By morning the rain clouds have vanished and my fears have

A high-altitude mountain landscape. In the foreground, a climber wearing a bright yellow jacket and an orange helmet is ascending a steep, rocky ridge. The climber is using a rope and a climbing tool. The ridge is composed of dark, jagged rock. In the background, a vast, rocky valley opens up, with patches of snow and a small, dark lake visible in the distance. The sky is a deep blue.

JENKINS FOLLOWS THE
SOUTHEAST ARÊTE OF
CLOUD PEAK WITH SAP-
PHIRE LAKE BELOW.

ebbed again. There is more room in the tank. “Let’s do it!” Mark shouts as we leave the tents at dawn, his voice echoing from the canyon walls.

The bottom of the rusty pillar is wet, but after one short fall I manage to stem and layback up the steep, dank corner of the second pitch. As he follows, Mark trundles a rock pillar the size of a fire hydrant that I’ve carefully avoided—the block confirms we’re on untrodden ground, because no climber passing here would have left it standing. The crux on the next pitch is dry, and Mark bridges wide on tiny holds as he pulls past a roof. Above is pitch after pitch of solid, white granite. After one runout stretch of face climbing, I cut my lead short, claiming I’ve run out of gear, but really I just want the comfort of a rope overhead. Mark charges through.

“Don’t you ever lose sleep the night before a climb?” I’d asked him at breakfast.

“Not here, not in these mountains—I’m just psyched to try,” he said. “I’ve worried before big Hi-

malayan climbs. I lay awake the night before soloing Mt. Cook in New Zealand, knowing I’d have to jump crevasses on the glacier. But not here.”

Moving fast, Mark tugs the rope for more slack. I think: *Maybe the thing he fears is missing out.* Mark goes away on long writing assignments—often on remote expeditions—three to four times a year. Meanwhile, his two daughters have grown into their 20s with their father away from home up to half the year. Whether at home or halfway around the world, he’s missing something important. “I’ve been telling my wife this is my last expedition for 20 years,” he says. Yet less than two months after we leave the Big-horns, he will fly to Myanmar to attempt Hkakabo Razi, a nearly 20,000-foot mountain on the border with Tibet, approached by 150 miles of arduous jungle trekking. The expedition will last seven weeks, Mark will lose 22 pounds, and the team will fail to climb the mountain.

Near the top of Cloud Peak’s south face, we sprawl



MACDONALD LEADING AT THE TOP OF THE SOUTHEAST ARÊTE OF CLOUD PEAK, WEARING NEARLY EVERY LAYER HE HAD FOR THE COLD CONDITIONS.

on grassy ledges to eat lunch, and then Mark leads one more steep pitch and we ramble to the top. It's one of the best new routes I've ever done. Thinking of the red pillar we've just climbed, and of both of us attempting to hang tough against advancing years, and of the insidious power of FOMO, I suggest a name: Rust Never Sleeps.

Mark pulls far ahead on the descent, and as he crosses the saddle below, I see him stop and dig in the talus. Has he found more airplane parts? He points to a blue and red pack he has pulled from under the rocks. Inside is a climbing rope, a figure eight belay device, a No. 6.5 Chouinard Stopper and a few oval carabiners, a tattered copy of Orrin and Lorraine Bonney's 1977 guidebook to the Bighorns, a tube of Savory & Moore glacier cream ("By appointment to H.M. The Queen"), a smashed Canon camera, and some socks and threadbare clothing. And this: a bottle of heavy-duty painkillers, prescribed in Pittsburgh in 1977. Sneza Kelly, whose

●
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COMMON
GROUND.**

name is on the bottle, died in a climbing accident at Seneca Rocks about five years later, I discover after the trip. She was 33, a postwar immigrant from the former Yugoslavia, and a clinical pharmacist. Was this her pack? Or had she given the painkillers to a friend who was headed into the Wyoming mountains? What storm or illness or accident caused an unknown climber to abandon this cache of valuable gear on a remote, windswept saddle?

Shadows rise to fill Paint Rock valley. The wrecked bomber, the forsaken cache—the saddle suddenly feels funereal. At camp I can't get warm despite wearing all my layers.

I declare a rest day, and after breakfast the next morning I wander far down the valley, photographing flowers and the flat, brightly colored stones that give Paint Rock Creek its name. Mark naps and makes notes in his tent. I find a neat disk of grass about four inches across—pikas assemble these miniature haystacks to store food for the long winter. The receding waters of Jellyfish Lake reveal coyote and fox tracks in the mud. By evening I feel better. We still have time for one more route.

Cooking dinner, Mark asks, "What's your favorite kind of climbing?" Before I can answer he says, "For me, this is it. I just love being out here. I want to spent the next 10 years doing what you've been doing—going rock climbing in all these amazing places, closer to home, with good friends." *He sounds like he's planning a relaxing retirement*, I think. *I just want to do a few more good routes before I get too old.* Mark swats a mosquito from his cheek and says, "Seriously, this is one of the best trips I've ever had. We are a really good team." And it's true: We had only climbed together twice before this trip, but in the wild Bighorns, with their seemingly endless potential for first ascents, we've found common ground.

I've convinced Mark to head for the hidden east face of Bomber Mountain. A photo I'd discovered online seemed to reveal a golden, leaning slab of granite like something out of the Sierra. After studying the map we've decided the easiest way to get there is to climb back to the high, haunted saddle and over Bomber's nearly 13,000-foot summit, find our way down into the east-facing cirque, climb a route back to the summit, and then descend to camp. It will be a long day.

The sun rises as we scramble to Bomber's top, nearly 2,000 feet above camp. We hike south down a plateau to a break in the cirque wall and then downclimb loose, treacherous gullies and slabs for nearly an hour, leaving a nut to anchor a short rappel when we cliff out. A broad snowfield guards the east face, and the snow is too hard to kick good steps in our approach shoes. I pull out my nut tool as an ice dagger, then use it to self-arrest when my feet slip

on hidden ice. I'm rattled when we reach the foot of the wall, more than four hours after leaving camp, and then I spill most of my water as I try to top off a hydration bladder in a spigot of melting snow.

The Sierra-like pillar was an illusion. About 800 feet of broken rock leads to a headwall with no obvious route. We decide to scramble as far as we can and hope a decent line reveals itself. We carefully zigzag up the lower wall, mounting several fifth-class steps, and then rope up beside a huge fin of snow, at the foot of a broken chimney in a shield of gray rock.

It's 11:30 a.m.—much too late to be starting an unclimbed and indistinct line on the “wrong” side of the mountain. It will be a long and hazardous retreat if the line doesn't go. Worse if a big afternoon thunderstorm moves in. Perhaps deadly if one of us gets hurt. Mark offers to lead the first pitch and stems up the chimney. Loose blocks choke the crack and litter the ledges. After two poor pitches, a long and tricky traverse on better rock leads to a small stance. I lead toward the offwidth above Mark's belay, shove our largest piece into the bottom of the crack, and shimmy up to a bulge that pushes my butt into space.



NUT TOOL AT THE READY, MACDONALD CROSSES THE SNOWFIELD BELOW BOMBER MOUNTAIN'S EAST FACE, FOUR HOURS INTO THE APPROACH.

BETA

Information on Bighorns climbing is scant. Mountain Project describes a few routes, and an article in the 2015 *American Alpine Journal* (published in August) will cover the history and some climbing possibilities on Cloud Peak.

It's about a 10-mile hike to the head of Paint Rock Creek, the easiest way to access the east and south faces of Cloud Peak and the Merlon. Horse packers will carry your gear to Mistymoon Lake; we paid \$600 for the round trip, including tip.

RECOMMENDED ROUTES

East Buttress of the Merlon (5.7). Easy climbing up broken slabs to a steep, solid buttress, first climbed in 1961. Probably best approached from the east, past Emerald and Sapphire Lakes.

Southeast Arête of Cloud Peak (5.8, 1,200 feet). Start on the left side of the ridge just left of the

Merlon, and follow the crest as it steepens and narrows.

Rust Never Sleeps, south face of Cloud Peak (5.11a, 850 feet). Ten pitches of steep, solid crack and face climbing.

Super Fortress, south face of the Merlon (5.11+, 1,250 feet). Only route in the area with extensive bolt protection. The upper half features sustained face climbing on excellent rock.

—Dougald MacDonald

DID YOU KNOW SNEZA KELLY?

Sneza Kelly or one of her friends mysteriously abandoned a cache of gear south of Cloud Peak in the late 1970s. She died in a climbing accident in West Virginia in 1982. The author retrieved a few items from the cache that he would like to return to Kelly's relatives or climbing partners. If you can help, please contact us at letters@climbing.com.

“I can't do this!” I don't have to yell—Mark is only 30 feet away.

“What makes you think I can do it?”

“You've climbed at Vedauwoo all your life.”

He is reluctant—for the first time I understand he may be as tired and stressed as I am—but we switch ends and Mark makes quick work of the offwidth and the strenuous hand traverse above. “Nice job!” I shout as he hauls our packs.

The next pitch follows a chimney stuffed with hanging blocks and jagged wedges. It feels like a game of Jenga with nightmarish consequences for an errant move. Mark is anchored into the drop zone 50 feet below. After delicately maneuvering around the most appalling stack, I set up a hanging belay to one side, where I can keep the rope from knocking the pile onto my partner. Gray clouds scud overhead. The Fear Reservoir is bubbling at the rim. “Thank you for not killing me,” Mark says soberly as he passes the loosest blocks and reaches my belay.

He disappears into a slanting groove above and continues toward the summit, but after 15 minutes the rope suddenly stops and Mark yells something unintelligible. A moss step has collapsed under his foot, launching him into a 20-foot fall. Soon, though, he's moving again, and then I hear another muffled shout that sounds like “off belay.”

On top of Bomber Mountain I kneel by a puddle atop a flat rock and suck water into my parched throat. Relief floods my core. The spillway opens. To the north and south, granite walls undulate in ribbons of light and darkness. There's so much more to climb. **C**

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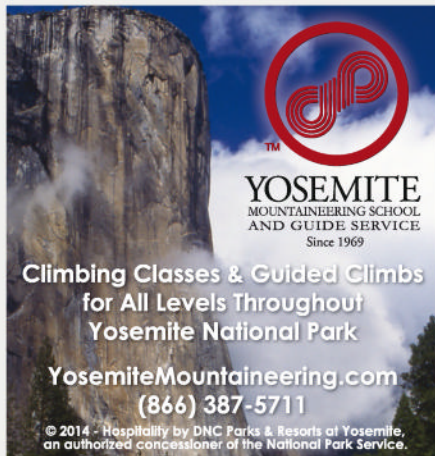
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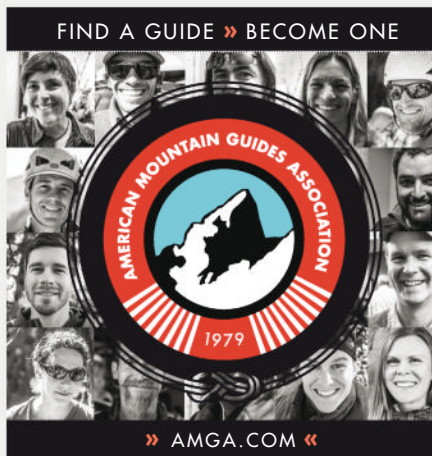
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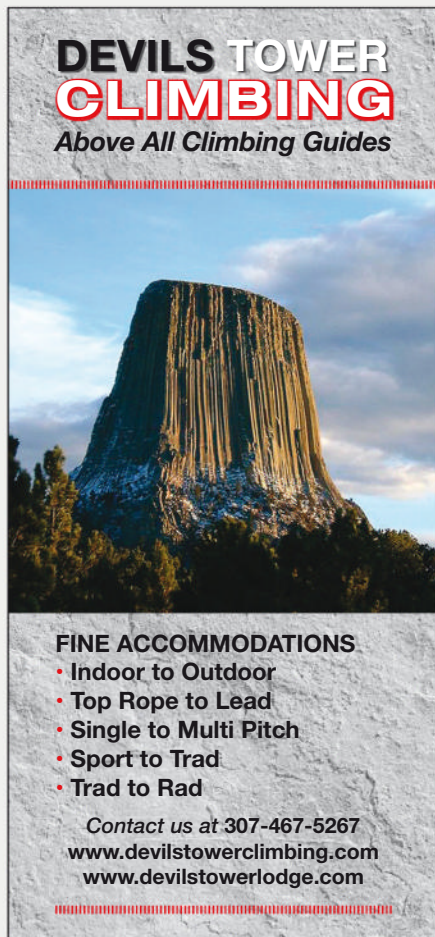
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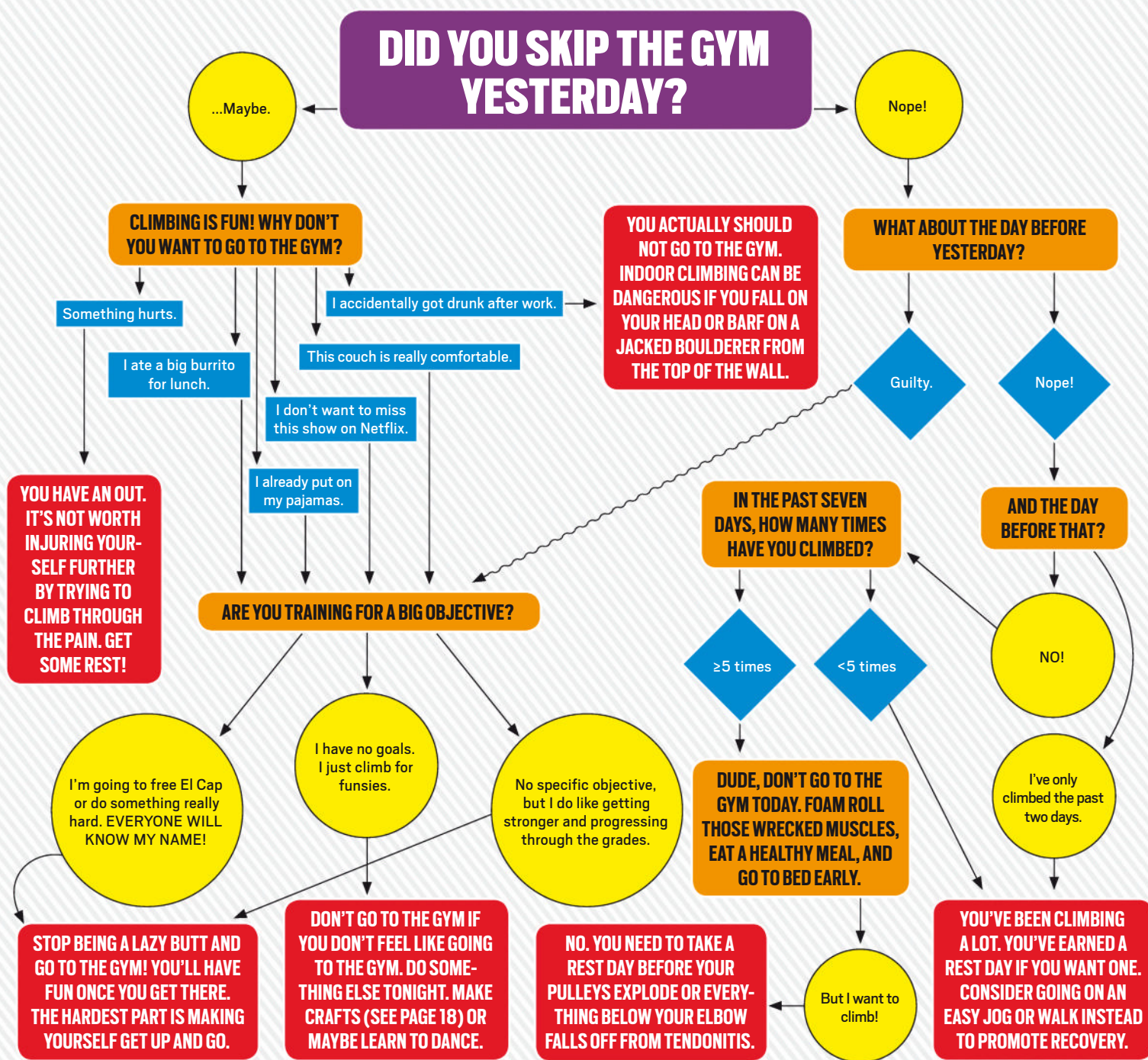
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Can you skip the climbing gym tonight?

BY KEVIN CORRIGAN

CLIMBING AT THE GYM IS GREAT. It's fun, it's a good workout, and it's social. But as nice as it is to pull on plastic, some days you just don't want to do stuff. And that's fine. You don't have to climb every day (in fact, you shouldn't). The tricky part is determining if you actually could use a rest day or if you just don't feel like driving to the gym. Follow this handy flowchart to find out if you've earned a day off.



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Bill Morse suits up for a larger than life burn on "California 5.12", a steep and thuggy 12c at Red Rock Canyon, Nevada Photo: Ben Moon



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